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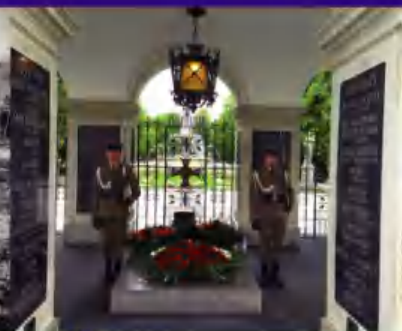


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# AMERICA IN WWII

The War • The Home Front • The People  
February 2016, Volume Eleven, Number Five



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# AMERICA IN WWII

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★  
KILROY  
WAS HERE

## Hitler Is Alive!

DUMBO WAS WHAT WE CALLED THE KID who approached us during recess one day, probably chewing on a bite of the Turkish Taffy he often had. He was a big, tough kid from a rough neighborhood, so none of us geeks was foolish enough to say his nickname within earshot of him, even though it was based not on a lack of academic prowess, but on his similar-sounding last name. Still, we were somewhat shocked to find out that he apparently knew more about history than us: “Did you know Hitler is still alive?” he asked.

At that time, I probably knew little more about Hitler than a child’s simple understanding that he was pure evil and that he tried to exterminate the entire Jewish race. He seemed to me then like the sort of monster that might tap on your bedroom window in the middle of the night until you woke up and saw him eerie in the moonlight, staring at you with a sinister smile. Then he’d break in and murder you. Now I was hearing he was still alive. I don’t think Dumbo said he was hiding in Philadelphia, but I figured he could be there as easily as somewhere else.

Fortunately, I forgot about the whole matter before I lost any sleep over it. Until now. While finishing up the issue you’re now reading, a book arrived for me in the mail titled *Hitler Is Alive!* (edited by Steven A. Westlake and published by Open Road Integrated Media). I wondered for a split second whether it was intended as a serious investigation into the secret escape of the man who would be the most wanted fugitive in history. Then I noticed that the cover looks decidedly unserious. It turns out the main image is from a now-defunct weekly tabloid headquartered in New York City called the *National Police Gazette*.

Beginning the year after Hitler was reported to have committed suicide with his mistress, the *Police Gazette*, as the publication was affectionately known, printed the first in a decades-long series of articles contradicting that story. The bodies were never found, the paper revealed—because the couple was whisked off to a waiting U-boat and secretly delivered to Argentina. The paper regularly published updates with the latest intelligence on the Führer’s whereabouts. The story was further spread over time by conspiracy theorists and various media, including the *Weekly World News*, the tabloid that beat the establishment press to the scoop that Ross Perot was an alien, complete with large black-and-white cover photo, pre-Photoshop era.

So maybe it was I who was the Dumbo. And maybe Hitler really is alive. If you keep up with the national and world news, you can’t miss the distressing proof that at least his spirit lives on.



*Carl Zebrowski*

Carl Zebrowski  
Editor, *America in WWII*



## WELL-TOLD STORY OF THE END

I WANT TO APPLAUD everyone who had a part in the creation and production of the fantastic feature “Ink on Paper Ends a War” [October 2015]. Any history teacher who covers Japan’s surrender would benefit by using your feature in their classroom. I hope *America in WWII* will offer photo-intensive features like this in upcoming issues.

*America in WWII* continues to improve—just when I think the magazine has reached its highest quality. You continue to surprise and impress me. Keep up the stellar work.

MIKE GRIFFITH  
Easton, Pennsylvania

## OFF TO THE WWII MOVIES

I JUST RECEIVED my December 2015 issue of *America in WWII* and began reading it cover to cover. I read Dana Jensen’s V-Mail request seeking input about war movies.

I can think of five off the top of my head. While maybe not the five greatest of all time, I find these movies inspirational, well acted, and enjoyable. I also think that they would all be on a list of the top 20.

In no specific order I would add four movies made during the war—*Guadalcanal Diary*, *Air Force*, *Wing and A Prayer*, and *A Walk in the Sun*—and a postwar movie, *PT 109*. I think that the scene in *Guadalcanal Diary* where William Bendix leads the marines in prayer during a nighttime bombardment is a true classic.

It will be interesting to see what other movies are “nominated.”

JOSEPH W. RACHINSKY  
West Chester, Pennsylvania

**Editor’s note:** Many readers responded to Dana Jensen’s request for suggestions of must-have WWII movies. So we compiled the following list from the suggestions of Mr. Rachinsky; S.W. Davis of Excelsior Springs, Missouri; Paul Kellett of Cambria, California; Mike Hull of Enfield, Connecticut; Robert Petroni of Las Vegas, Nevada; Robert Beauchamp of Sebastopol, California; Ron Leech of Roseville, Michigan; Ron Szyjajlo of Depew, New York; Joe Bagley of Spring House, Pennsylvania; Carl Sardaro of Milan, New York; Herb Meisen



of Commack, New York; and Leon Basile of Woburn, Massachusetts. Not all of the contributors would agree that all these films belong on the list. But listing each individual’s recommendations was impossible.

*Air Force* (1943), *Anzio* (1968), *Attack!* (1956), *Back to Bataan* (1945), *The Band of Brothers* (2001 TV miniseries), *Bataan* (1943), *The Battle of El Alamein* (1969), *The Battle of the River Plate* (1956), *Battleground* (1949), *Between Heaven and Hell* (1956), *The Big Red One* (1980), *The Bridge at Remagen* (1969), *The Caine Mutiny* (1954), *Casablanca* (1942), *Combat* (1962–67 TV series), *Command Decision* (1948), *Crash Dive* (1943), *The Cruel Sea* (1953), *The Dam Busters* (1955), *Danger UXB* (1979 TV miniseries), *Darby’s Rangers* (1958), *The Desert Fox: The Story of Rommel* (1951), *The Desert Rats* (1953), *Destination Tokyo* (1943), *The Devil’s Brigade* (1968), *Downfall* (2004), *The Eagle Has Landed* (1976), *Empire of the Sun* (1987), *Enemy at the Gates* (2001), *Father Goose* (1964), *The Fighting Sullivans* (1944), *Flags of Our Fathers* (2006), *Flying Tigers* (1942), *Fury* (2014), *Go for Broke* (1951), *God is My Co-Pilot* (1945), *The Great Raid* (2005), *Guadalcanal Diary* (1943), *Gung Ho!* (1943), *Halls of Montezuma* (1950), *Heaven Knows, Mr. Allison* (1957), *Hell in the Pacific* (1968), *Hell to Eternity* (1960), *Hellcats of the Navy* (1957), *In Harm’s Way* (1965), *In Which We Serve* (1942), *Is Paris Burning?* (1966), *Judgment at Nuremberg* (1961),

*Kiss Them for Me* (1957), *Malta Story* (1953), *The Man Who Never Was* (1956), *Memphis Belle* (1990), *Merrill’s Marauders* (1962), *Mister Roberts* (1955), *The Mountain Road* (1960), *Mrs. Miniver* (1942), *Never So Few* (1959), *None But the Brave* (1965), *Objective, Burma!* (1945), *One of Our Aircraft Is Missing* (1942), *Operation Mincemeat* (2010 TV movie), *Operation Petticoat* (1959), *The Pacific* (2010 TV miniseries), *Pearl Harbor* (2001), *PT 109* (1963), *Raid on Rommel* (1971), *Red Ball Express* (1952), *Red Tails* (2012), *Run Silent, Run Deep* (1958), *Sahara* (2005), *Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949), *Sink the Bismarck!* (1960), *633 Squadron* (1964), *Stalag 17* (1953), *Stalingrad* (2014), *The Story of G.I. Joe* (1945), *Target: Berlin* (1944), *The Thin Red Line* (1998), *Thirty Seconds over Tokyo* (1944), *36 Hours* (1964), *This Is the Army* (1943), *To Hell and Back* (1955), *Tobruk* (1967), *Too Late the Hero* (1970), *Torpedo Run* (1958), *The Train* (1964), *Tuskegee Airmen* (1995 TV movie), *Uprising* (2001 TV movie), *Wake Island* (1942), *A Walk in the Sun* (1945), *The War* (2007 TV miniseries), *War and Remembrance* (1988 TV miniseries), *The War Lover* (1962), *The Way Ahead / The Immortal Battalion* (1944), *The Way to the Stars / Johnny in the Clouds* (1945), *Winds of War* (1983 TV miniseries), *Windtalkers* (2002), *Wing and a Prayer* (1944), *The World at War* (1973 TV miniseries), *A Yank in the R.A.F.* (1941), *Yanks* (1979), and *The Young Lions* (1958).

## GREMLINS

**December 2015:** Pinup—Gloria Grahame wasn’t the female lead in the 1955 film *Oklahoma!*; Shirley Jones was; Grahame played Ado Annie. “America’s Spy in Switzerland”—The German telegram on page 35 says “Please send no cigarettes,” not any. Theater of War—The filmmakers mentioned in the last paragraph are Joel and Ethan Coen, not Coe.

Send us your comments and reactions—especially the favorable ones! Mail them to V-Mail, *America in WWII*, 4711 Queen Avenue, Suite 202, Harrisburg, PA 17109, or e-mail them to [editor@americainwwii.com](mailto:editor@americainwwii.com).

# Warhawks and Nighthawks

by Carl Zebrowski

**N**EW YORKERS HAD important things on their minds in the winter of 1941–1942. Japan had just bombed the United States into the world war. Boys were readying to head overseas with the military. Industry was gearing up to manufacture the material required for a long fight.

Few eyes in Greenwich Village would have looked twice at the man wandering around the neighborhood with pencil and paper. Not only would they likely have seen him before—this was his usual routine—but they would be more concerned about enemy bombers that might be crossing the sky than about an artist scribbling.

Edward Hopper wasn't one to panic that the Nazis might be targeting the Village, where he'd lived with his wife, Josephine, at 3 Washington Square since 1913. "Ed refused to take any interest in our very likely prospect of being bombed—and we live right under glass sky-lights and a roof that leaks whenever it rains," Josephine wrote. "...Hitler has said he intends to destroy New York and Washington." Hopper was completely consumed by his latest project, the soon-to-be-famous oil-on-canvas *Nighthawks*. "Painting seems to be a good enough refuge from all this," he'd written to a friend in Nazi-occupied Paris, "if one can get one's dispersed mind together long enough to concentrate upon it."

The sketches Hopper was making that first winter of the war were among the bits and pieces he'd assemble into the painted scene. This was his typical work method. "Of course I do dozens of sketches for oils—just a few lines on yellow typewriter paper—and then I almost always burn



Edward Hopper painted *Nighthawks* after weeks of sketching around Greenwich Village. It wasn't an existing scene, however, but a product of distinct elements and his imagination.

them," he later said. "If I do one that interests me, I go on and make a painting, but that happens only two or three times a year...."

It was a promising sign that he kept making sketches, 19 of them in all: a pancake syrup cruet, tall stainless steel coffee urns with spigots, a salt shaker, and more. He also posed for himself wearing a fedora, seated in front of a mirror. Josephine posed too. Then there was the centerpiece diner itself, with its long, curving front window. Many have tried over the years to figure out exactly what diner Hopper was depicting. Hopper said only that it "was suggested by a restaurant on Greenwich Avenue where two streets meet."

Once Hopper deemed his collection of sketches complete, he began brushing oil onto canvas. This was a big canvas by his standards—33 by 60 inches—and he proceeded to cover it in his slow and methodical way, stowed away in his home studio, sheltered from any war hysteria outside its walls. "He was about a month and a half working on it," Josephine wrote, "interested all the time, too busy to get excited over public outrages."

Finally Hopper arose from the studio with a finished painting. An all-night diner, Art Deco-style, is viewed from outside. A man and woman sit together at the counter, faces in view, on the other side of a very long window. Another man sits apart by himself, back to the viewer. A server dressed in white mans the counter. The distinctive glow of fluorescent lamps—a newly widespread source of lighting at that time—spills out into the dark, empty street. Hopper later explained that he chose a

specific paint, zinc white, for that effect—for "a more brilliant and less warm white."

Critics have described the painting as capturing loneliness, separateness—the modern urban condition. There's the man and woman sitting slightly too far apart for intimacy, and the other customer looking "sinister," as Josephine put it. Hopper later said he was trying to portray what may have been after-hours predators: nighthawks. "I didn't see it as particularly lonely," he explained. "I simplified the scene a great deal and made the restaurant bigger." That created space and a feeling of emptiness. "Unconsciously, probably," he continued, "I was painting the loneliness of a large city."

Soon after Hopper finished the painting in late January, it was on display at his regular gallery. It didn't hang there long. The Art Institute of Chicago wrote Hopper a check for \$3,000 (\$44,000 current value) to add the painting to its collection. War or not, it was the start of a very good year for Hopper, who at age 59 had earned a fast tidy sum and produced what would prove to be his landmark work. The Art Institute, for its part, had savvily acquired an iconic piece of modern American art. ★



# AMERICA IN WWII

PINUP

## *Kathryn Grayson*

A janitor caught Kathryn Grayson singing on the empty stage of Missouri's St. Louis Municipal Opera House when she was 12 years old. He sent her to Frances Marshall of the Chicago Civic Light Opera, who began training her.

That was 1934. Three years later, in California, Grayson (born Zelma Kathryn Elisabeth Hedrick) landed a record contract with RCA's Red Seal classical label. A coloratura soprano, she set her heart on opera. But an Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer scout saw her pretty face and heard her sing. After 18 months of MGM boot camp, she debuted in 1941 as the singing secretary in *Andy Hardy's Private Secretary*.

Grayson soon appeared beside stars like Abbott and Costello and Gene Kelly. After a break to entertain troops, she joined Gene Kelly and Frank Sinatra in the 1945 hit *Anchors Aweigh*. After that, it was musical after musical, including *Showboat* in 1951 and *Kiss Me Kate* in 1953.

As Hollywood musicals declined in the late 1950s, Grayson moved to the stage, accepting various roles, including Guinevere in *Camelot* in 1962. She died in Los Angeles in February 2010.

PHOTO COURTESY OF [WWW.DOCTORMACRO.COM](http://WWW.DOCTORMACRO.COM)



# Taking Care of Uncle Sam's Boys

by Robert Gabrick

**A**MERICA'S ENTRY INTO World War II swelled the US Army to more than eight million men. That was a lot to take care of. Fortunately, the herculean task fell to an organization with years of experience, the Quartermaster Corps, which had been doing its job since the Revolutionary War.

Today, the Second World War forms a central part of the Quartermaster Corps's 240-year story of feeding, clothing, sheltering, moving, and equipping Uncle Sam's troops. At the US Army Quartermaster Museum, established in 1957 at Fort Lee, Virginia, that story unfolds through a staggering display of artifacts.

Visitors encounter World War II from the start when they discover the re-created office of Lieutenant General Andrew T. McNamara, quartermaster of the First Army during World War II, in the History and Heritage gallery. The adjacent McNamara Supply exhibit features a DUKW (an amphibious truck commonly called a Duck) unloading supplies on Normandy's beachhead on June 9, 1944, three days after D-Day.

Finding chow, enough of it to feed an army, was a big part of the Quartermaster Corps's WWII mission. The Quartermaster Market Center System used chain-store purchasing methods and experienced civilian specialists to buy nearly 11 million tons of merchandise, supplying some 600 army posts, camps, and stations with perishable foods and supplies. At the war's height, the corps served more than 24 million meals daily.

Dishes, utensils, mess kits, rations (which included cigarettes during World War II), stoves, and ovens fill the chow-themed Subsistence gallery. WWII food preparation in the field typically happened in a company kitchen equipped with three gasoline-fired stoves, an ice chest, 32-gal-



Items recovered from downed B-24 *Lady Be Good* by a Graves Registration team appear in the Quartermaster Corps's museum.

lon cans, an immersion heater for washing utensils and pots and pans, and a tent for cooking. A "portable" field bake oven consisted of two 550-pound sections! One display here celebrates KP (kitchen patrol or kitchen police) duty, the GIs' hated assignment peeling potatoes, washing dishes, and the like. A section about coffee reveals that during World War II, Uncle Sam operated roasting plants in New York, Seattle, Atlanta, Chicago, and Philadelphia, producing some 300,000 pounds per month.

An army had to be clothed as well as fed. The Quartermaster Corps created a prototype for each uniform and then manufactured in quantity based on each design. An upcoming exhibit in the Clothing and Textile gallery will include some of the prototypes, along with the Eisenhower jacket worn by General Dwight Eisenhower.

Quartermasters had to keep important liquids—water and fuel—flowing to the front. In the Petroleum and Water gallery, Lieutenant General George S. Patton's insatiable demand for fuel gets the spotlight, and visitors see his customized jeep, with horns constructed from trombones. There is also a 6x6 truck representing the famed Red Ball Express that hauled fuel, food, and ammunition to the European

front after D-Day. The 8,200-truck Red Ball fleet wore out 800 tires a day.

The same gallery that covers aerial operations highlights down-to-earth field services such as laundry, clothing renovation, shoe repair, and showers—things that keep GIs clean and healthy. Placards tell of WWII efforts to combat maladies such as lice, trench foot, and typhus.

One more colorful service the Quartermaster Corps performed from 1924 to 1962 was developing army insignia, flags, medals, seals, and coats of arms. Visitors can pull out drawers to see examples of these in the Past Missions gallery. The Medal of Honor's current form dates from 1944, and a WWII specimen awarded posthumously to Private George Watson, a quartermaster who died saving nine sailors on a merchant ship sunk by the Japanese, is on display.

The Quartermaster Corps was long responsible not only for troops but also for mules and horses. The Remount exhibit in the Past Missions gallery explores this. By the 1930s, motorized transportation had reduced the need for animals, but the Remount Service still supervised a horse-breeding program and included saddlemakers, harriers, and blacksmiths.

When WWII mobilization began in 1939, experts estimated the army would need 200,000 horses; instead, the corps shipped just 49 overseas. The coast guard did use 3,000 Remount horses to patrol America's coastlines and monitor enemy submarine activity until 1944. And pack mules proved useful in mountainous Tunisia and Italy, as well as in the jungles of the China-Burma-India theater, where approximately 14,000 were used.

A video explains another WWII animal-management role: dog training. Starting in 1942, the Quartermaster Corps maintained the War Dog Program (the K-9





Top left: WWII dishes, mess kits, and cookware abound in the Subsistence gallery of the US Army Quartermaster Museum, Fort Lee, Virginia. The museum chronicles the work of the army's supply and logistics command, the Quartermaster Corps. Lower left: A "portable" WWII field oven divides into 550-pound halves. Above, right: In a display, Quartermaster Corps troops unload a DUKW on a Normandy beach.

Corps, unofficially). The American Kennel Club and a group called Dogs for Defense recruited civilian pet dogs for military use. Initially, dogs seemed destined to guard civilian war plants. But demand for sentry, scout, patrol, messenger, and mine detection dogs led to the program's transfer to the Remount Service.

Transporting GIs was a Quartermaster Corps mission until the 1942 establishment of the Transportation Corps. Museum visitors can enter a WWII van that was outfitted by the Quartermaster Corps and served as Eisenhower's personal living quarters.

Providing temporary and permanent shelter was a huge Quartermaster Corps job during World War II. Some of the Series 700 buildings developed as temporary shelters by the corps's construction division remain in service today. One series of photographs here illustrates the erection

of a barracks from boards on the ground to completed shell in just nine and a half hours. Nearby is a barracks interior with a soldier's equipment laid out on a bunk.

In death as in life, soldiers were in the Quartermaster Corps's care. More than a quarter-million fallen GIs lay in temporary cemeteries around the globe at the end of World War II. The exhibit "Duty to the Fallen: The Army's Mortuary Mission" in the Mortuary Affairs gallery includes artifacts ranging from dog tags (in use by 1941) to a truck seemingly being loaded with a soldier's remains.

Here too are crew items from the ill-fated B-24 Liberator *Lady Be Good*. The bomber took off from Soluch, Libya, on April 4, 1943, to raid Naples, Italy, but never returned. Fifteen years later, geologists 400 miles south of Soluch spotted wreckage. A Quartermaster Corps team arrived to identify *Lady Be Good*. She had veered off

course and run out of fuel. Her nine crewmen had bailed out over the forbidding Libyan desert; eight bodies were recovered.

The mission of the corps's Graves Registration Service included supervision of national cemeteries from 1862 to 1973, when the corps passed this role to the Veterans Administration and Department of the Interior, keeping only the US Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery and Arlington National Cemetery. A museum display tells the story of Arlington and the Tomb of the Unknowns.

Two final galleries chronicle the Quartermaster Corps's past and outline the history of Fort Lee, the corps's home base and WWII training center and home to nearly 1,000 German POWs in 1945.

War narratives tend to focus on combat. The US Army Quartermaster Museum reminds us that the unglamorous job of taking care of soldiers is often the crucial ingredient in victory. In World War II, the Quartermaster Corps delivered that ingredient by the truckload. ★

## IN A NUTSHELL

**WHAT** The US Army Quartermaster Museum

**WHERE** Fort Lee, Virginia

**WHY** The visual representation of the WWII army's complex logistics • WWII DUKWs, trucks, and jeeps • WWII artifacts ranging from cookware to insignia to part of a barracks

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ROBERT GABRICK is a contributing editor of *America in WWII*. At Fort Lee, he also visited the US Army Women's Museum. His article on that museum is scheduled to appear in our next issue.

# HOW THE SONS OF BITCHE GOT THEIR NAME

Just how strong was France's Maginot Line? The Century Division arrived to find out—and to give hell to the Germans defending it.

by Edward G. Longacre

A FORTIFIED LINE, LIKE ANY OTHER FENCE, IS ONLY AS GOOD AS ITS OPENINGS. So it was with the Maginot Line, the great barrier built by France in the 1930s to deter German invasions like the one that had happened in 1914 at the outset of World War I. Constructed astride France's borders with Germany, Switzerland, and Luxembourg, the Maginot Line was fortified to the extreme. There were above- and below-ground fortifications, including artillery casemates, infantry and tank traps, weapons stores, command bunkers, and escape galleries, all shielded in layers of concrete and steel and connected by subterranean railways.

But the Maginot Line was an exercise in futility. The proof came in the summer of 1940. A new German horde, under Chancellor Adolf Hitler, simply went *around* the Maginot Line, invading through neighboring Belgium, where the French had refrained from extending the defensive works. The Germans had found an opening, and they poured into France.

After forcing the French government to surrender, the Nazis occupied the very works built to keep them out and prepared to resist a new enemy: the would-be liberation armies of the Allied Expeditionary Force, under supreme commander Dwight D. Eisenhower. From the end of 1944 into March 1945, the Maginot Line would finally get a fair test of its effectiveness, and at its strongest point: Bitche, France. The test would be conducted there by the 100th Infantry "Century" Division, a fresh component of Eisenhower's force. It would be as much a test for the invaders as for the Maginot Line itself.

The Century Division was with the first part of Eisenhower's force to approach the Maginot Line: the US Seventh Army of Lieutenant General Alexander "Sandy" Patch. By late November 1944, Patch's command, consisting of the VI Corps (in which the Century Division served) and the XV Corps, had fought its way through the German-held Hautes Vosges ("High" Vosges) Mountains of eastern France. The breakthrough was a feat of historic proportions. Since the first century BC, numerous armies had failed to penetrate the High Vosges. Patch did it even though many of his units, including the Century Division, had never seen combat before.

Patch's Seventh Army seemed poised to make history again as it prepared to turn east through France's Alsace and Lorraine provinces, cross the upper Rhine River, and invade Germany. But SHAEF—the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force—put on the brakes. Eisenhower wanted his force to move ahead together along a broad front. Patch was to remain in France until Allied forces farther north, under generals Omar Bradley, George S. Patton, and other American and British commanders, made similar progress. In line with this strategy, the Seventh Army turned north to secure the lower flank of Patton's Third Army, which was preparing to attack Germany's Saar region. As Eisenhower admitted, Patton had become "road bound and nearly halted." He needed help to get moving again.

The Seventh Army's revamped route led Patch's force directly toward a portion of the Maginot Line that surrounded Bitche (beesh, as the Allies pronounced it), a medium-sized town first settled in the 17th century. As Patch's headquarters noted, this sector, which extended about 15 miles through low mountains west of the Saverne Pass, was "generally considered the strongest point in the entire Maginot System." Clustered together to form the Ensemble de Bitche were dozens of forts of various sizes, many consisting of 6 to 11 interconnected units, or "blocks." Elements of the German 1st Army occupied these imposing works, notably the battle-hardened 25th Panzergrenadier Division (infantry with motorized combat transport vehicles), a veteran unit of the Russian front. Thousands of other Germans were dug in on the high ground all around the town.

Opposite: Troops of the 100th Infantry "Century" Division—men of Company M, 399th Combat Team—point rifles and a water-cooled .30-caliber machine gun at German lines in France's High Vosges Mountains on November 4, 1944. They had landed at Marseilles, some 400 miles away, on October 20. By October 31st, they had relieved the 45th Division's 179th Infantry, veterans of Sicily and Italy, Anzio, and Southern France.

ALL PHOTOS THIS STORY: NATIONAL ARCHIVES







## HOW THE SONS OF BITCHE GOT THEIR NAME by Edward G. Longacre

Bitche's Maginot forts posed the most visible obstacle to any potential attacker, but the city's own defenses were fearsome in their own right. Their focal point was a massive citadel of red sandstone, constructed in 1624 on the site of an old castle and strengthened into a fortress in 1740. In the two centuries since then, the citadel had thwarted numerous attackers, including the Austrian army during the Napoleonic Wars and the forces of Prussia in 1793 and 1870–1871.

NOT ALL OF THE SEVENTH ARMY WAS ASSIGNED to the Bitche sector. The VI Corps, including the Century Division, was directed to penetrate the Forest of Haguenau, an enemy-infested position in Alsace province. The XV Corps, meanwhile, moved to strike the Maginot forts in Lorraine province, including Bitche, more than 40 miles northwest of Haguenau. Eisenhower foresaw that the Maginot forts promised greater difficulty, so he instructed Patch to reinforce the XV Corps. The first addition was the unit that had spearheaded the historic thrust in the High Vosges: the Century Division.

The Century's High Vosges performance had startled many. It was hard to imagine an unlikelier victor than the Century Division. Organized in the summer of 1942 but not sent overseas until October 1944, the division had spent so much time marching in war bond parades and simulating combat for visiting dignitaries that it became branded as a "show unit" and a "permanent training division." Yet the thorough preparation the Centurymen had received at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and later in the mountains of Tennessee would give them a leg up when campaigning in Europe's craggy heights. The division's performance in the High Vosges earned the respect of experienced GIs and the confidence of its leaders.

A principal reason for the Centurymen's success in the High Vosges was the skill and sagacity of their commander, Major General Withers A. Burruss, a Virginia Military Institute graduate and 30-year army veteran. Respected and admired by his troops, the soft-spoken Southerner had a reputation for gaining assigned objectives without unnecessarily risking his men's lives. To many GIs, Burruss was the antithesis of win-at-all-costs commanders like Patton.

When the Century Division reinforced the XV Corps for the Maginot Line attack, Burruss initially placed it in a reserve position near Sarrebourg, almost 30 miles southwest of Bitche. There the men received additional training for the task ahead. On November 29, while two-thirds of the division—the 398th and 399th Infantry Regiments—remained in rest mode, the 397th Infantry took to the field. The 397th advanced northeast toward the Moder River,

pummeled all the way by German artillery, mortars, machine guns, and flak wagons (halftracks equipped with anti-aircraft guns firing 20mm explosive rounds "in inconceivable quantities," as one survivor noted). Despite such punishing resistance, the 397th kept driving the enemy from one position to another.

On December 3, the Century's 398th and 399th Regiments moved out. Supported by the division's four field artillery battalions, they departed the XV Corps reserve and headed east along roads leading to the Ensemble de Bitche's midpoint. These two regiments coordinated their movements with the 44th Infantry Division. While the Centurymen struck several Maginot works—Forts Freudenberg, Schiesseck, Otterbiel, and Grand Hohekirkel, among others—the 44th would storm Fort Simserhof, farther to the west.

The 398th and 399th pressed toward Bitche in snow and freezing rain, encountering some of the strongest roadblocks they'd ever seen, everything from tree trunks to concrete slabs, many heavily defended. Through strenuous and continued effort they drove the Germans away and leveled the barriers with tankdozers (M4 Sherman tanks equipped with bulldozer blades that were raised and lowered by hydraulic jacks). Against sometimes desperate

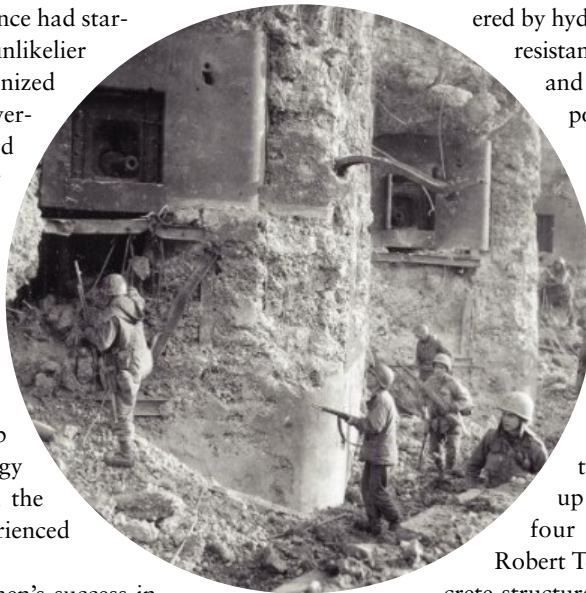
resistance, they forced the enemy out of Lemberg and Mouterhouse, Reysersviller, and other positions progressively closer to Bitche.

Century intelligence officers suspected that some of the Maginot forts ahead might be undefended, but many of the GIs on the line feared that the Germans they were displacing were falling back to Bitche, where they would fight to the last man.

As the Centurymen drew within sight of Forts Freudenberg and Schiesseck, the first of Bitche's Maginot forts, they began to appreciate what they were up against. Peering down from Hottviller, four miles northwest of Bitche, Sergeant Robert Tessmer of the 397th beheld "massive concrete structures over two stories tall with large moats

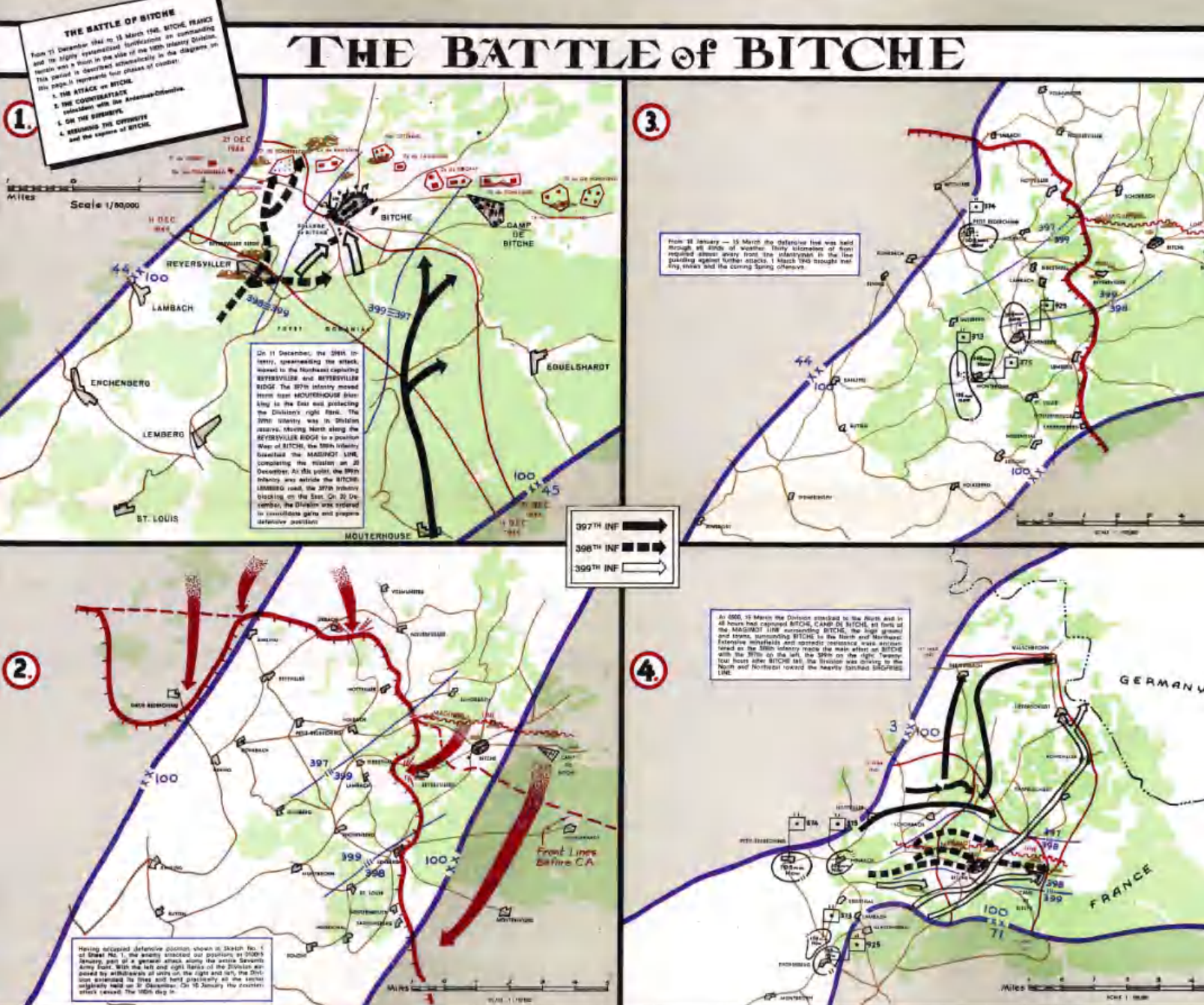
in front of them. Entrance was over a drawbridge. There were numerous gun ports for machine guns and artillery pieces that interlocked each fort so that they protected each other. The concrete was over 10 feet thick on this back side and there didn't seem to be any way to get close enough to try to blast our way in."

Fort Freudenberg was mostly underground. Its several levels enclosed elevators that brought supplies and ammunition to the small casemate that extended above ground. The fort's business end bristled with twin machine guns, automatic rifles, and a 47mm anti-tank gun. Fort Schiesseck, to Freudenberg's right and rear, comprised 11 blocks of various sizes and firepower. These mutually supporting works, constructed of reinforced concrete and connected by underground tunnels and railways, were defended by "every conceivable type of modern weapon," wrote



Above: The Centurymen broke the famously unbreakable High Vosges defenses. By mid-December they and the 44th Division were closing in on Bitche, where the Germans held sturdy Maginot Line forts. By December 19, when these 44th Division men of the 71st Infantry probed abandoned Fort Simserhof, Bitche seemed ready to fall. The next day, the 44th and the Centurymen had to let go and join the Battle of the Bulge.





The Battle of Bitche was a disjointed affair. This 1945 map shows (1) the December 1944 assault until disruption by the Bulge, (2) January 1945's Operation Nordwind counterattack, (3) the January–March wait for favorable weather, and (4) March 1945's victorious offensive.

one Centuryman. That included mortars and 75mm and 135mm howitzers. The only hope of overcoming such rock-solid defenses was to exploit weak points—if any could be found.

Assigned to make the main attack on the defenses west of Bitche was Colonel Paul Daly's 398th Infantry, positioned at the center of the Century Division. On the morning of December 14, a regimental combat team built from the regiment's 1st Battalion together with engineers, tanks, artillery, and other support units left its newly dug foxholes and started forward. Providing flank support was Lieutenant Colonel John M. King's 397th Infantry on the left and Lieutenant Colonel Elery M. Zehner's 399th Infantry on the right.

The lead Centurymen started up a slight incline onto a cleared plain that led to Forts Freudenberg and Schiesseck. They were in the open, unprotected, clearly visible to enemy gunners. They advanced, noted the 398th's historian, "with not the slightest rip-

ple in the ground behind which to escape murderous shrapnel from bursting shells or automatic fire crisscrossing from the pill-boxes.... The sickening whistle and ear-splitting crash of enemy artillery sent [the men] to...clutching the earth, more from force of habit than from the protection they knew wasn't there." Potential reinforcements found it impossible to provide close support. Machine-gunner Roger Witt of Company H summed up the frustration: "It was just lie low until the attack was over."

**D**ESPITE THESE UNBEARABLE CONDITIONS, the 398th combat team kept moving ahead. Cutting through walls of barbed wire, bypassing an extensive minefield, and braving a storm of bullets and shells, the men gradually got within rifle range of the enemy defenses. Then, by concentrating fire on the forts' few visible apertures and breaches, they eventually drove the





After the Bulge, the Centurymen faced a new onslaught, January's Operation Nordwind. Then winter locked them down. Finally, on March 15, they resumed their assault on Bitche. Victory was theirs the next day. Here, on the 19th, GIs tour the city's tall sandstone citadel.

Germans away from their posts and into the bowels of the works.

In a matter of hours, Freudenberg, the less powerful fort, was silenced, though the Americans were unable to blast their way inside. Schiesseck, however, could not be neutralized so easily. The deadly interlocking crossfire from its blocks was impenetrable. It not only kept the 398th from breaching any part of Schiesseck, but also forced the Centurymen to abandon Freudenberg. The 1st Battalion fighters relinquished their prize and fell back to safer positions under cover of darkness.

ONE THING WAS CLEAR: the Americans needed different tactics. So Burress called up heavier weapons and trained them directly on the forts. On December 15, battalions of eight-inch howitzers and chemical mortars (named for their ability to fire chemical weapons if necessary, but actually used for explosive and incendiary shells, smoke, and markers) blasted away at the forts. Later, 50-some P-47 Thunderbolt fighters from the XII Tactical Air Command, pounded the casemates with 500-pound bombs.

The eight-inch and 240mm guns "made the loudest noise that I have ever heard," wrote Sergeant George F. Tyson, Jr., of the 397th. "The fire seemed to shoot out of the guns from all sides." But despite the thunder, the results were disappointing. The barrage merely pockmarked the forts, while the aerial bombs "would bounce off the casemates and detonate in the air or on the ground yards away." On the 16th, the 373rd Field Artillery Battalion made more damage by moving its 155mm "Long Tom" howitzers

within point-blank range and opening fire, while 90mm tank destroyer guns and M12 self-propelled cannons fired directly on the casemates. Even then, the forts continued to operate.

When the 398th attacked again on December 17, an intense artillery preparation, including a rolling barrage (continuously adjusted to keep striking enemy lines ahead of advancing infantry) by the 375th Field Artillery Battalion, paved its way. Colonel Daly was wounded by return fire, but Lieutenant Colonel Robert M. Williams assumed command of the 398th and the assault, which this day was led by Companies I and L. At age 28, Williams became one of the youngest regimental commanders in the European theater.

The stubborn forts weathered this latest storm, too. But newly formed shell craters now offered the advancing GIs some cover. Still buffeted by artillery, anti-tank, mortar, and heavy machine-gun fire, the dogged riflemen reached Fort Freudenberg, which had resumed firing, and Blocks 10 and 11 of Fort Schiesseck, and peppered potential entrances with everything they could fire at them.

Suddenly, the steel door of Block 11 flew open. A satchel charge placed in front of the block's entrance had failed to explode until a well-aimed bazooka round detonated it with great effect. The attackers stormed inside, securing the upper levels and the tunnels that linked the block with others in the Schiesseck complex.

As the men of the 398th spread out to attack the other Schiesseck blocks, they improvised a tactical arrangement that brought excellent results. Covered by the infantrymen, TNT-laden members of the 325th Engineer Battalion climbed to the top of each casemate and dropped satchel charges. The resulting explo-



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sions not only blew out the doors, but also formed a ledge on which boards could be laid to bridge the moats that covered the forts' approaches. Once inside the Schiesseck units, the engineers dropped explosives down stairways, elevator shafts, and ventilation ducts. German defenders who weren't killed outright were trapped underground.

It took several hours to achieve these results, but now the Americans had a real foothold. At day's end, Williams ordered his men to remain in place, holding their ground. The attack on the Maginot Line resumed early on the 18th under another rolling barrage. The shelling drove the defenders deep inside their works—and away from their weapons.

Schiesseck, with its firepower thus reduced, became vulnerable, permitting the attackers to neutralize its blocks one by one. "Some of the forts [blocks] were entered," wrote the 398th's historian; "others could not be blasted open despite the amount of explosive charges applied and were sealed." An engineer officer recalled that "the operative strategy was to seal the pillboxes off and allow the enemy who preferred the lower levels to stay there indefinitely." Once the fire slackened, tankdozers came up to bury the above-ground turrets, as well as the moats and ditches, with mounds of earth. Welders came forward to seal every door that had been blown open. It had taken a total of 5,000 pounds of dynamite to make Schiesseck's blocks inoperable.

**A**T THIS POINT, enemy resistance virtually ceased. The victors turned to strengthening their hard-won positions, one of which was counterattacked on the evening of the 19th. A Century Division observer inside Fort Freudenberg discovered the attempt, and a bank of machine-guns was quickly set up to halt it. At a range of 100 yards, the weapons cut down dozens of enemy soldiers. The survivors were forced to hit the earth, where they frantically waved handkerchiefs as surrender flags.



While the 398th's 3rd Battalion kept a tight grip on its new prizes, the 1st Battalion pressed beyond to seize high ground overlooking Bitche. Meanwhile, elements of the 397th moved up to take the less formidable forts shielding the town, Otterbiel and Grand Hohekirkel. These actions, combined with the enemy's recent abandonment of Fort Simserhof to the 44th Division, made Bitche's capture seem to be just days, perhaps even hours, away.

It wasn't to be. Instead, at sundown on December 20, the Centurymen began relinquishing their seized strongholds and falling back. A surprise German assault, launched on the 16th, had struck in the Ardennes region of Belgium, France, and Luxembourg, creating a dangerous backward bulge in the American line. SHAEF ordered the Seventh Army, with the Century Division, to cease attacking, regroup, and expand its area of operations to support the lower flank of the hard-hit Allied line in this new fight, the Battle of the Bulge.

The Seventh Army was also warned to prepare for a *second* German counteroffensive, reported to be imminent. According to Patch's intelligence officers, this assault would come through the Saar River Valley. That would put it on the left flank of the Seventh Army's XV Corps, now that Patton's Third Army had pulled back because of the Bulge.

The intelligence reports proved to be deadly accurate. Operation Nordwind ("North Wind") began after dark on New Year's Eve, with elements of two German army groups striking the Seventh Army's western flank. Some of the six enemy divisions committed to the counteroffensive struck farther south, hoping to clear Alsace and Lorraine of the Allied invaders. The Germans attacked in multiple formations—even in suicidal waves reminiscent of Japanese tactics in the Pacific. Patch's command fell back under the continuous hammering, which lasted until late January 1945.

The Century Division was hard hit by

Top: Inside the citadel of Bitche, T/4 Andrew Hvizdak of New York City studies a sign of hasty departure: a German soldier's abandoned dining table. Middle: Most of Bitche's defenders got away. But in both phases of the battle, some became stuck and had to choose between death and surrender. This German, trapped when Centurymen blasted the passages between forts at Bitche in the battle's first phase, gave himself up on December 16. Bottom: Bitche townsfolk watch Century Division troops move through their liberated city on March 16, 1945.



Above: Centurymen and Sherman crews of the 781st Tank Battalion stand with Bitche residents on March 16. Opposite: After Captain Thomas Garahan and his Company E, 398th Infantry, fought their way into Bitche on March 16, Garahan raised this flag sewn by a local woman.

Nordwind but gave up less ground than the divisions to its right and left. That prevented the Germans from gaining their objectives. The outcome was largely due to Burress's use of a division-wide defense in depth. With this tactic, multiple defensive lines—some running parallel to one another, some staggered to protect the flanks—tangled up the enemy's attacks to drain their momentum. The tactic also enabled Burress's units to shift quickly, reinforcing one another, shoring up threatened sectors, and retaking lost positions. Lieutenant General Jacob L. Devers, commander of the division's parent Sixth Army Group, was so impressed that he publicly lauded the "rugged American stubbornness of the combat elements of the 100th Infantry Division," which had given "a splendid example of skillful maneuver."

When Nordwind ceased, the Germans and Americans both went to ground, establishing strong positions within artillery range of each other. Europe's harshest winter in many years—with below-freezing temperatures, fierce winds, mobility-crippling snow, and bottomless mud during the intermittent thaws—put heavy combat on hold for several weeks. The Centurymen kept busy patrolling toward the fortifications west of Bitche, now reoccupied by the Germans. The division took numerous prisoners

throughout the winter; the fact that so many Germans readily surrendered suggested that enemy morale was in sharp decline.

The miserable weather continued for months. Only on March 15, with the roads finally free of snow and slush, did the Seventh Army prepare to assault the Maginot Line again. While the 3rd and 45th Divisions attacked farther west, the Century Division would advance eastward to capture Bitche, the heavily armed camp just beyond it, and every operable fort that defended them.

OVER THE WINTER, the Germans had erected new works in front of Bitche, shielded by barbed wire and thousands of mines. So, even though some of the forts, notably Freudenberg, remained inoperable, and despite the division's hard-won familiarity with the terrain, there were daunting new obstacles to bedevil the Centurymen.

At 1 A.M. on the 15th, the XV Corps guns let loose a pounding barrage. "There was never a second of darkness from the flashes of the explosions as it went on for hours on end," wrote Private Richard P. Drury of the 397th. "I felt nothing but pity for the poor souls who had to endure it." While most of the divisions on the Seventh Army line went forward quickly, Burress held his men



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back until 5 A.M., concerned they might fall prey to newly planted German landmines in the predawn darkness. And this time—unlike the first attack back in December, when the 398th Regiment carried almost the full weight of the effort—all of the Century Division infantry regiments would move out simultaneously.

Hoping to surprise the enemy, the Century Division began its advance, without rolling artillery cover, but with close support from mortar units, tanks, and tank destroyers. These new tactics achieved quick results. On the north end of the division, the 397th, led by E Company, gained a blocking position outside Hottviller, while two other companies seized high ground farther east at Schorbach. All told, the regiment advanced nearly four miles through the enemy lines. This remarkable achievement enabled the 397th to neutralize enemy mortar and *nebelwefer* (rocket-propelled artillery) positions that had been menacing the Centurymen's attacks on the Maginot forts, while also cutting off escape routes out of Bitche.

Not every outfit got so far so fast. Despite a promising start, the 398th combat team, in the division's center, bogged down in minefields around Fort Freudenberg under heavy rifle and machine-gun fire. Late in the afternoon, with surprise no longer a consideration, the division artillery shelled the area so accurately that the regiment's 1st Battalion regained mobility. Circumventing the mines, it gained a foothold north and east of Fort Schiesseck. At the same time, the 2nd Battalion fought its way to Freudenberg, which it seized for the second time in three months. Fanning out, the 2nd secured every block in the Schiesseck complex. Most were found still sealed or otherwise inoperable, testimony to the thorough job the 398th had done in December.

From the high ground around Schiesseck, the GIs beheld a glorious sight. "There below us lay Bitche, the focal point of our effort for almost four months!" wrote one. "Krauts were streaming downhill from us, toward Bitche. And in Bitche itself, they were high-tailing it out of town and along whatever escape route they could find." The fugitives were under fire not only from the Century Division's artillery but from the same fighter-bombers that had shelled the Maginot forts in December.

Throughout the fighting, the riflemen, mortar men, and machine-gunners of the 399th Infantry covered the division's right flank while also assaulting five enemy-held hills around Reysersviller, almost two miles southwest of Bitche. Thanks to the firepower and dexterity of the regiment's 3rd Battalion, two hills fell quickly, and the others were encircled from the rear. The most heavily defended position was Spitzberg Hill, held by hundreds of Germans and covered with no fewer than 4,000 land mines. Despite heavy resistance, by 4 P.M. Spitzberg was in the 2nd Battalion's hands, thanks to support from a section of medium tanks and the heroics of several infantrymen. One of these,

Sergeant Richard Trapani of Company F, had singlehandedly taken out two machine-gun nests before falling mortally wounded, enabling his pinned-down company to advance again.

The combined efforts of the Century's regimental combat teams had a decisive impact. As the division's historian wrote, by relieving pressure "from the attacks on the Maginot forts and by eliminating supporting fires, [they] caused the defense of the Maginot Line to collapse." This exposed Bitche to capture and occupation.

EARLY ON THE 16TH, a battalion of the 397th Infantry secured a strategic crossroads north of town, effectively sealing Bitche's fate. Simultaneously, the 398th captured the last operational forts of the Ensemble de Bitche despite moderate resistance. At 7:30 A.M., Company E of the 398th, followed by the rest of the 2nd Battalion, entered Bitche from the northwest against intermittent small-arms fire. Climbing to the top of one of the tallest buildings, Captain Thomas H. Garahan raised an American flag over the conquered town. The banner had been sewn in secret by a local woman, an ardent supporter of the Allied cause. By the time the 399th Infantry swept into the town from the south and west, resistance had faded.

A Centurymen reported that the garrison "fired only five rifle shots to defend the town after the 399th entered."

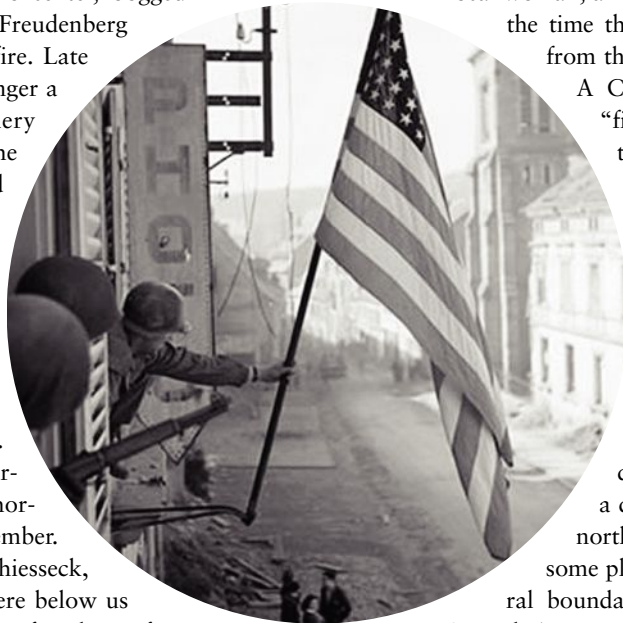
Seizing Bitche's historic red sandstone citadel was a true anticlimax: a six-man party entered cautiously only to find it clear of the enemy. The outlying defenses, including the well-armed Camp de Bitche, put up stouter resistance. But the outcome was never in doubt. By the morning of the 17th, most of the Centurymen had departed the surrendered town, driving a demoralized enemy before them. To the north, Allied forces had advanced to, and in some places crossed, the Rhine River, the natural boundary of Germany's heartland. Now the

Seventh Army was free to attack Germany's own version of the Maginot Line, the WWI Siegfried Line. A breakthrough there would open southwestern Germany to the Allies.

The fighting around Bitche had been fierce, but Burrell's conservative tactics had kept casualties remarkably light, and the achievements were great. Backed by other elements of the XV Corps, the Century Division had captured numerous fortifications defended by a desperate enemy armed with state-of-the-art weaponry. Moreover, it had seized a stronghold that had defied attackers, including the German army in 1940, for 200 years. Mindful of these accomplishments, the Centurymen would proudly carry a hard-won nickname through the rest of the war and beyond: The Sons of Bitche. ★

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EDWARD G. LONGACRE, a retired US Air Force historian residing in Virginia's Tidewater region, has written frequently about the Century Division for America in WWII. His father was a WWII Centurymen.



# MISSION TO MEET MAO

Chiang Kai-shek was America's ally.  
But what if Communists, not Chiang, ruled postwar China?  
In 1944, America decided to get to know them.

by Andrew Lam

**F**IRST LIEUTENANT HENRY WHITTLESEY PEERED out the cabin window at the wrinkled landscape below, where the shadow of the plane rippled like a dark bird. The land was empty, with no person, animal, or vehicle in sight. A brown blanket of earth lay in folds from horizon to horizon—the eternal emptiness of China.

The C-47 Skytrain's droning engines made it nearly impossible to converse with the other passengers. There were eight of them, and Whittlesey made nine, flying from Chungking to Yen-an on July 22, 1944, to find out whether reports and rumors about the Chinese Communists were true. Though Mao Zedong and his Red Army had been fighting the Japanese in northern China for years, no American officials had gone to see them until now.

If it had been quiet enough to talk, Whittlesey and the others might have been listening to John Service brief them on the Communists. Service, whom everyone called Jack, knew the most about China. He was practically Chinese himself, born and raised in Szechuan, the son of American missionaries. He spoke perfect Mandarin and, at age 35, he was the senior diplomat of the group. Whittlesey was only 30. His assignment in Yen-an would be to facilitate the rescue of American airmen who'd been shot down or had ditched behind enemy lines.

The Skytrain banked and seemed to dip. Whittlesey looked down and saw what appeared to be a plain with buildings on it that looked flattened. He glanced up and was surprised to see

dozens and dozens of doorways set into the surrounding hillsides. They were entrances to cave dwellings, and there were Chinese at most of them, happily waving at the plane.

He saw a primitive airstrip with a small crowd of people gathered at the far end. The plane touched down on the rough runway for a hard landing. Seconds later, Whittlesey lurched sideways as the plane struck something solid. He grasped his seat firmly. The plane kept moving forward and tilted down and to the left. The left wing and propeller scraped the ground. A fountain of sparks danced off the engine cowlings. Then something hit close to the cockpit. As the plane twisted to the left, skidded, and stopped, there came a pinging of gravel against the undercarriage plates. Shouts of surprise, anger, and relief came from the men on board.

Whittlesey and the others scrambled to the aft hatch and jumped onto the ground. Surveying the scene, they saw that the plane's left wheel appeared to have hit a hole in the ground, one that would have been impossible to see from the cockpit. The damaged wheel strut had caused the plane to drop on its left side. When the propeller had struck the ground, it broke off, knifing into the fuselage near the cockpit, barely missing pilot Jack Champion.

Almost before the Americans had a chance to catch their breath, a four-man Communist reception approached. Mao and Zhou Enlai were unmistakable from the photographs Whittlesey had seen. The Americans learned from them that the hole in the ground that had taken out the plane was probably a sunken grave,



LEFT & OPPOSITE COURTESY OF THE SERVICE FAMILY

Above: The American visit with China's Communist rebels that became known as the Dixie Mission got off to a literally bumpy start in July 1944 with a rough landing. But as Americans and Chinese mingled outside the plane, first impressions looked positive. Opposite: The good feelings lingered, as suggested in this scene with Communist commander Mao Zedong (left center) and mission commander Colonel David Barrett (far right).







and the Chinese appeared deeply embarrassed about it. But Colonel David Barrett, the mission commander, smiled, laughed, and shook hands with his hosts. After a round of introductions, he accompanied the Communist leaders into the back of a covered truck, which sped them into Yen-an.

The Communists wore drab clothes that matched the tone of the landscape. They seemed very friendly. They were the arch-enemies of Chinese Nationalist President Chiang Kai-shek, America's ally. But if they were helping to fight the Japanese, didn't that make them America's ally, too?

So began the Dixie Mission of 1944, America's first and best chance to evaluate and understand the Chinese Communists who would become the rulers of China.

### The Japanese Invade China

THE SECOND WORLD WAR BEGAN in the East on July 7, 1937, when a skirmish between Japanese and Chinese forces at the Marco Polo Bridge near Peking sparked a full-scale invasion of China by the Japanese army. The Japanese swiftly conquered much of China's eastern seaboard, defeating Chiang's Nationalist government armies at Shanghai, Nanking, and Wuhan. Chiang's forces retreated far inland, up the Yangtze River to the remote city of Chungking.

The Japanese invasion was a catastrophe for China. Fifteen to twenty million Chinese died during the war. Horrific atrocities were committed against the Chinese populace, including the Rape of Nanking, one of the darkest moments in human history. But there was one group of Chinese for whom the war was fortunate: the Communists.

Before the Japanese assault, Chiang had been obsessed with eradicating Mao's Communists. He almost succeeded. In October 1935, the desperate Red Army broke free from Chiang's encircling armies in southeastern Jiangxi province and embarked on what would be known as the Long March—a year-long, 6,000-mile odyssey across China that only 1 in 10 of the original 80,000 troops survived. The Communists ultimately found sanctuary in Yen-an, a small, remote city in the northern province of Shaanxi. After that, Japanese aggression forced Chiang to relent in his pursuit of Mao's remaining forces and turn to confront the invaders from the Land of the Rising Sun.

### Enter America

AFTER THE JAPANESE BOMBED Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, drawing the United States into the war, it was clear to President Franklin Roosevelt's administration that supporting China would be essential. Hundreds of thousands of Japanese troops were occupying China. If China were to capitulate, or be conquered, those enemy troops would be free to fight Americans in the Pacific.

So thousands of Americans were sent to Chungking to support Chiang's Nationalist government. Supplies were sent from India via the Burma Road or flown over the eastern end of the Himalayas that American pilots knew as the Hump. Colonel Claire Chennault's 1st American Volunteer Group, a unit of mercenary fighter pilots flying with the Chinese air force, scored victories in the air against the Japanese.

**B**UT ALMOST FROM THE OUTSET, the Americans found relations with the Nationalists to be troubled. The Chinese military suffered from poor leadership, brutal conscription practices, and what some Americans thought was a reluctance to engage the enemy. Corruption and graft were prevalent. Stories spread of officers hoarding food or selling US supplies on the black market while their soldiers starved or froze on the front lines. It seemed the Nationalists were more interested in hoarding American weapons for use in a future civil war with the Communists than they were in using them against the Japanese. Later, the relationship between Chiang and the general in command of US forces in the China-Burma-India theater, General Joseph Stilwell, grew so acrimonious that Chiang insisted that Stilwell be removed, a wish Roosevelt granted.

### The Dixie Mission

AS THE WAR CONTINUED, America's frustration with its Nationalist allies grew. By 1944, American Foreign Service officers in Chungking had learned of another group of Chinese fighters who were supposedly fighting an effective guerrilla war against the Japanese in the north. This group was based in Yen-an. It was Chiang's adversaries: the Chinese Communists.

A diplomat named John Paton Davies was the first to suggest that an American observer mission be sent to Yen-an to evaluate the Communists. John Service, another foreign service officer, also supported a mission. Chiang strongly opposed the idea, but reluctantly agreed after meetings with US Vice President Henry Wallace in Chungking in June 1944.

Because the Chinese Communists were viewed as the rebels in



## MISSION TO MEET MAO by Andrew Lam

China, the Americans decided to call their mission the Dixie Mission, a reference to the Rebels in the American Civil War. They also used that name for the group itself, though it was officially designated the US Army Observer Group. The mission's goal was to assist in the rescue of downed American pilots in northern China, to interrogate Japanese prisoners of war, to establish a weather station to assist US bombers en route to Japan, and to evaluate the Chinese Communists as a fighting force.

The first nine Dixie Mission participants were on that flight from Chungking to Yen-an on July 22, 1944. They found Yen-an unlike any other part of China they had seen. The landscape was barren. Unlike in humid, foggy Chungking, the air was arid, the sky an expanse of bright blue. The ground was covered by a layer of loess, a fine, dust-like sediment that was easily blown about by

brought up in China, put it: "I find myself continually trying to find out just how Chinese these people are."

Like the Chinese in Yen-an, the Americans lived in caves. A typical tunnel-like room was 15 feet long with a brick-laid floor and charcoal brazier for heat in the winter. Furnishings in each cave included a rough-hewn table, a couple of wooden chairs, and bedding that consisted of a cotton-stuffed mattress placed on a board laid across two sawhorses. For light, the men had candles. They had outhouses for toilets.

The Dixie Mission was supplied via a weekly flight from Chungking. With the second of those flights, a group of mechanics arrived to repair the crashed C-47, which the men had taken to calling the Wounded Duck. Subsequent flights brought more Americans to join the mission.



COURTESY OF COLONEL W.J. PETERSON

Opposite: The immediate goal of the Dixie Mission to Yen-an was to observe the Communists' fight against Japanese, who held the Chinese territory shown in gray. Above: Dixie Mission officers pose in homespun suits that their Communist hosts had given to them as gifts. This photo would create trouble for the Americans later, when Senator Joseph McCarthy's postwar hunt for Communist sympathizers in the United States produced it as evidence.

the wind. Japanese bombers had long since flattened Yen-an's buildings, so the city's denizens had carved cave homes, offices, schools, and even hospitals into the surrounding hillsides.

Relations between the visitors and their Communist hosts were warm and friendly. Yen-an's citizens were polite, helpful, and enthusiastic. The soldiers of Mao's all-volunteer Red Army were motivated and well-disciplined. In contrast to the Nationalist-held areas, there appeared to be no banditry, corruption, or severe poverty. Service wrote in one of his dispatches, "All of our party have had the same feeling—that we have come into a different country and are meeting a different people. There is undeniably a change in the spirit and atmosphere. As one officer, born and

Colonel Barrett, mission commander and a Sinophile who spoke Mandarin, was impressed with what the Red Army had achieved with very limited supplies and weapons. In a series of frank lectures, Red Army leaders such as Yeh Chien-ying, Zhu De, and Lin Biao explained their strengths and weaknesses. They were constantly in short supply of weapons, vehicles, artillery, and ammunition. Poor communications and lack of radios made it hard to coordinate attacks. Their guerrilla tactics made it difficult to save wounded soldiers. Lacking the knowledge of how to drive automobiles, they were forced to destroy captured Japanese trucks rather than use them.

Among the Communists' strengths were high mobility, high morale, the ability of small units to operate independently, and a



COURTESY OF THE SERVICE FAMILY

While with the US mission in China, David Barrett got notice that he'd been awarded the Legion of Merit, America's sixth-highest military honor. Here, on October 5, 1944, Yeh Chien-ying, Communist army chief of staff, gives a speech at a large gathering of Communists and Americans honoring Barrett for his accomplishment. Mao is sitting at the table to the left of the US officer holding the camera.

strong cadre of battle-tested officers with over a decade of combat experience. The Communists enjoyed the support of the people and relied on their generosity behind enemy lines. They tried to avoid set battles with the Japanese, instead harassing them by giving ground, attacking weak points, and conducting sabotage.

One of the surprising and enjoyable aspects of life in Yen'an was the social life. The Communist leadership encouraged dancing and entertainment. In the summer, a weekly Saturday night dance was held outside in a peach orchard. The Americans contributed to the nightlife by bringing a movie projector. The first film they screened was Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*. The Chinese loved it.

### Favorable Reports

THE AMERICANS' IMPRESSIONS of the Communists were reflected in Service's dispatches to the US State Department. Service noted their lack of formality. The people were open and direct. They lived simply and wore inconspicuous homespun clothing. Women were treated as equals. Mao and his leaders were approachable. "Bodyguards, gendarmes, and the claptrap of Chungking officialdom are completely lacking," Service wrote. He described low-wage laborers reading newspapers, students leading meetings, and an active social life of dances, lectures, drama, and music. "Morale is very high," he wrote. "The war seems close and real. There is no

defeatism, but rather confidence. There is no war-weariness."

Service, Davies, and others came to advocate American support for the Chinese Communists, as well as for the Nationalists. They suspected the Communists might win a future Chinese civil war and believed continued US relations with Mao might serve to counteract the Soviet Union's influence upon them. But these views ran counter to those of some Washington policymakers, who believed America should support only the Nationalists. Despite the Dixie Mission's friendly relations with the Communists, and the belief that any weapons given to them would be put to good use against the Japanese, the US government never approved the transfer of any weapons or supplies.

Later, the American ambassador to China, Patrick Hurley, accused Service, Davies, and Barrett of bias in favor of the Communists. He believed these men were undermining his own policies and proved a formidable adversary. He supported Davies's transfer to Moscow and Service's back to the United States. He blocked Barrett's promotion to brigadier general and had him transferred to Kunming. After the war, Davies and Service would pay an even higher price for their favorable reports about the Communists.

In October 1944, a small group of the Americans accompanied a force of Communist guerrillas on a four-month mission deep



## MISSION TO MEET MAO by Andrew Lam

behind Japanese lines. Whittlesey, Colonel Wilbur Peterkin, and Foreign Service officer Ray Ludden were members of the group. They traveled east on foot and by mule, across Shanxi and Hebei provinces—over a thousand miles in severe winter weather.

On the return trip, Whittlesey and a Chinese interpreter ventured into a village, unaware that the Japanese had recently arrived and occupied it. Both were captured. The Communists launched a desperate attack to save them. Losing many soldiers, they drove the Japanese out of the village, but they were too late to save Whittlesey and the interpreter. Both had been executed. Whittlesey had been shot in the back of the head and bayoneted in the back. In Yen-an, the Americans renamed their mess hall Whittlesey Hall after the Dixie Mission's only casualty.

### Success and Disappointment

IN AUGUST 1945, THE WAR'S END brought rejoicing in Yen-an and Chungking. But while the Americans looked forward to returning home, the Chinese braced themselves for civil war. President Roosevelt's successor, Harry Truman, sent General George Marshall to broker a truce between the Nationalists and

Davies, and others paid a high price for the favorable reports they had written about the Chinese Communists. They were accused of being Communist sympathizers. Service was dismissed from the State Department in 1951. In 1956, the Supreme Court determined that he had been wrongfully discharged. He was finally reinstated in 1957, but his career stagnated and he retired in 1962. Davies served in Germany and Peru after the war, but, like Service, he was driven out of the State Department, in 1954. For a time he ran a furniture business in Peru. Later he returned to the United States and fought to clear his name. He was reinstated by the State Department in 1969.

**S**OME BELIEVE THE DIXIE MISSION was a lost opportunity to develop a constructive relationship with the future rulers of China. Ongoing dialogue might have prevented China from strongly allying with the Soviet Union or have had an effect on the Korean and Vietnam wars. Others doubt that any such relationship could have substantially influenced Mao's totalitarian state.

Perhaps history would have unfolded differently if the Dixie Mission's reports had been positively received. At the very least,



COURTESY OF THE SERVICE FAMILY



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Left: Relations between the Americans and Communists remained warm throughout the Dixie Mission. Here, Barrett talks with Mao lieutenant Chu Teh (far right), and something said has apparently amused Mao. Right: Spirits appeared high when visiting US Ambassador Patrick Hurley (far right) met Mao at his headquarters on August 27, 1945; just a couple of weeks earlier, atomic bombs had pummeled their common enemy, Japan, into submission. Appearances were deceiving, however. Hurley later used his political connections to punish Barrett and other Dixie Mission officers for their support of Mao and the Communists.

Communists. Negotiations ensued for over a year, from December 1945 to January 1947, but the Marshall Mission failed. The Chinese Civil War erupted in full force, the Dixie Mission left Yen-an in March 1947, and the Americans pulled out of the country altogether.

Despite a seemingly insurmountable advantage in weapons, supplies, aircraft, and artillery, Chiang's armies steadily lost battles and ground to the Communists. His Nationalists were hurt by corruption, poor leadership, and rampant inflation. By 1949, the Communists had cornered Chiang in one of the last Nationalist strongholds at Chengdu. On December 10, 1949, he fled, ending up in Taiwan, where he set up his government in exile. He never returned to mainland China.

During the postwar Red Scare in the United States, Service,

these Americans serving in a distant and difficult land, whose views went against the prevailing opinion of American policymakers, offered their nation's leaders valuable insight into the future in Asia. As Service wrote of the Communists just days after arriving in Yen-an, "One cannot help coming to feel that this movement is strong and successful, and that it has such drive behind it and has tied itself so closely to the people that it will not easily be killed." He couldn't have known how right he would prove to be. ★

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SCRAPPIN





# G H I S T O R Y

It took a lot of steel to fight the war. A nationwide recycling scramble brought in everything from empty cans to Civil War cannons to a car shot up by John Dillinger's gangsters.

by David A. Norris

The Great War of 1914–1918 became the *First* World War as a new armed conflict engulfed the earth. In December 1941, as America joined the new *Second* World War, the cannons of the Great War went into scrap piles like this one. Melted down, they would build a new arsenal for the new war.

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## SCRAPPING HISTORY by David A. Norris

America threw everything but the kitchen sink at the Axis powers to win World War II. Actually, there may have been a few kitchen sinks in the mix, too, provided they were made of metal. That's because finding metal was the constant, consuming hunger of US war industries, working around the clock to churn out bombs, bullets, battleships, and B-17s. To feed that hunger, the nation scrapped and melted down not only the usual junkyard cars, cast-off cans, and squeaky bedsprings, but a surprising assortment of metal objects large and small that included even some irreplaceable historical artifacts.

America's desperate need for metal began in an instant with Japan's December 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor. Suddenly, the United States was plunged into a war unprepared. Industry had to shift into high gear, building the engines of war while the armed forces built themselves up and trained men and women. So, scarcely a month after Pearl Harbor, President Franklin Roosevelt set up the War Production Board (WPB) to help American industry transition from civilian to military production. Charged with feeding the behemoth of war industry, the WPB set about allocating vital manufacturing materials such as gasoline, oil, rubber, iron, and steel.

### A Ministry of Scrap

IT WAS THE WPB SALVAGE DIVISION that dealt directly with finding more metal. Its General Salvage Section gathered scrap metal from homes, farms, and businesses, largely through volunteer efforts. Its Special Projects Section handled larger sources of scrap metal, such as abandoned railroads, bridges, and industrial facilities. Other sections dealt with scrap from automobile graveyards and industrial recycling.

Why use scrap metal rather than the nation's abundant raw materials to make new steel? The WPB anticipated this question and was quick to answer that scrap was routinely used even in peacetime. Starting with scrap rather than ore, the WPB explained, eliminated some of the preparation that ore required before steelmaking could begin. Using scrap let foundries turn out new steel much faster.

What America needed to do was increase the peacetime trickle of scrap to a wartime flood of reusable metal. One WPB study

estimated that 42 million tons of scrap would be required each year to produce new steel. Roughly half of the necessary amount would be salvaged from metal wasted during the process of manufacturing steel. The rest had to come from the existing sources—scrap dealers and junkyards—but in much higher volume, so the WPB ran ads in newspapers and magazines across the country calling for scrap.

Numerous local governments and civic organizations conducted scrap-metal drives for the WPB. Citizens participated in these drives, donating any cast-off or idle metal they could find to their town, school, or other organization, which in turn sold it to junk or scrap dealers and allotted the proceeds to charity or war-related projects. Civilians could also sell their materials directly to the dealers. The WPB preferred these arrangements over direct metal donations to the government because the dealers saved Uncle Sam the trouble of sorting and preparing the various types of metal for processing.

### A Nation Scrounges for Metal

IN THE SEARCH FOR scrap metal, eyes naturally turned toward the nation's more than 20,000 auto junkyards. Newspapers reported that a car could yield about 1,500 pounds of usable steel. Junkyard inventory, and worn-out jalopies and abandoned cars brought in by tow trucks, were broken apart. Sometimes the old vehicles were set on fire to burn away upholstery, paneling, and other non-metallic material.

Among the thousands of old vehicles donated for the war was one owned by Alex Slaby of South Bend, Indiana. The car was in poor shape for driving, but it had some unique features: four bul-



Cannons weren't enough to sate war factories' bottomless hunger for scrap. So the federal War Production Board (top, logo) swung into action, pressing Americans to part with all their idle metal and the other defense production ingredients listed on this Pennsylvania wartime poster (above). Then the WPB mobilized a nationwide army of young scrap collectors to bring in the harvest. Boy Scouts did yeoman's work. At this scrap drive in Madison, Wisconsin (opposite), a local scout wears an impromptu helmet as troops unload their trucks at the state capitol.









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HERE

CAPITOL

HOTEL

B DAVIS - O DEHAVILAND - IN THIS OUR LIFE  
ALIAS BOSTON BLACKIE - CHESTER MORRIS



## SCRAPPING HISTORY by David A. Norris

let holes. On June 30, 1934, Slaby had parked his car in front of Merchants National Bank in South Bend. Suddenly, outlaw John Dillinger and his gang burst out of the bank, carrying almost \$30,000 in stolen money. The gangsters had a shootout with police as they escaped, and four bullets hit Slaby's car. Slaby kept the vehicle for eight years to show it off and tell the story about his brush with Dillinger. But when the war came, he decided to turn it in for scrapping.

It didn't take long into the war for it to become obvious that production would soon consume much of the nation's stockpile of junk cars and other traditional scrap. So, to keep steel mills from idling, the WPB launched a massive scrap-metal drive for October 1942. Newspapers helped local organizing committees publicize the event, urging citizens to give as much as they could.

As the great nationwide drive began, as many as 30 million American school children became "junior commandoes" in a massive scrap-collecting army. They began their campaign on Monday, October 5. "Commissioned" as lieutenants, sergeants, or other ranks, depending on how much they collected, children roved everywhere on the lookout for metal (and rubber, too). The Boy Scouts rounded up tons. Some overly enthusiastic junior commandoes occasionally dragged in items such as manhole covers; those were quickly returned.

Even "the dead were called upon" for scrap contributions, reported the Associated Press. Workers removed metal fences, urns, and benches from cemeteries. The superintendent of Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts, believed that as much as 200 tons of iron could be salvaged from the fences around the graves.

### Melting America's Heritage

WHILE GIVING UP BROKEN or unneeded utensils, tools, and toys, many citizens also looked for larger pieces. Attention focused on public statues and old war trophies, such as cannons used in the Civil War or World War I. During a presidential press conference in August, a reporter asked FDR what he thought about throwing cannons and statues into metal drives. "There are a great many statues around the

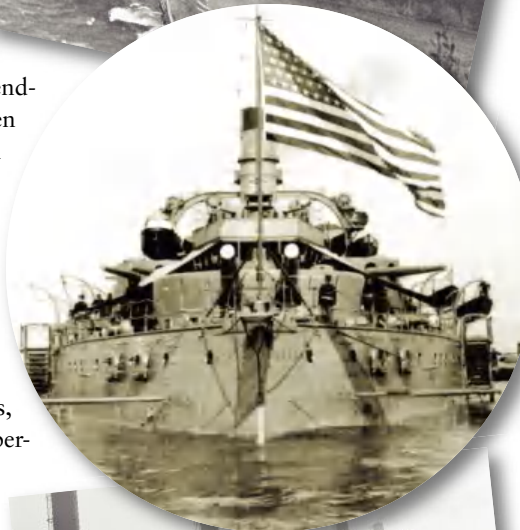
country which would probably look better if they were turned into guns," Roosevelt joked. Concerning historic artillery pieces being taken from courthouse greens, he said "it wouldn't be a bad idea to get some kind of approval or authorization by Congress...that after the war is all over we will replace them with something...that has a modern history in the winning of the war."

So it was that many local governments, historical societies, and veterans' organizations gave up antique cannons, cannon-

balls, and memorial plaques during the October 1942 scrap drive. Many of the memorials were fairly new, erected to commemorate World War I. Less than 25 years after the armistice of November 11, 1918, halted that "war to end all wars," memorials were being fed to smelting furnaces to create arms for the new war. Heavy cannons, many captured from the German army, went to salvage yards. At least one town donated a WWI tank for scrap.

ONE OF THE LARGEST historical artifacts to be tagged as scrap in 1942 was a Spanish-American War ship: the USS *Oregon* (BB-3). Commissioned in 1896, the *Oregon* helped win the Battle of Santiago de Cuba on July 3, 1898. In June 1925, the navy lent the battleship to the state of Oregon, and after restoration she became a museum ship and public attraction in Portland. But in 1942 the thousands of tons of steel that was the USS *Oregon* was turned over for scrapping. First the guns and superstructure went. Then the navy halted the operation, after naval logisticians had thought of another use for the Victorian-era hull; the *Oregon* was sent back to war, this time as a lowly ammunition barge. Packed with dynamite and munitions, she was anchored for use in the Second Battle of Guam, July–August 1944. She survived the Pacific war, but she wasn't spared for good; she ended up in a scrapyards in Japan in 1958.

The repurposing of metal objects from America's military heritage reached even to items from the Revolutionary War. A few guns from that era were donated in 1942 or later. The Civil War was well represented. In the October 1942 drive,



Scrappo (opposite), welded together from 10 tons of junk on the courthouse lawn in Salem, Oregon, after a July 1942 scrap drive, had a message about repurposing metals. With a ventriloquist's help, Scrappo told locals—and, through a Universal Newsreel, the nation—about scrap-gathering. But it wasn't just *home* scrap that Scrappo wanted. Big sources—objects like Washington State's Tacoma Narrows Bridge (top, in mid-collapse), the Spanish-American War's USS *Oregon* (middle), and captured WWI German guns (bottom, outside a steel mill)—were crucial.

Boy Scouts in Twin Falls, Idaho, brought in a Civil War sword, and junior commandoes in Cincinnati gathered three Civil War muskets.

Civil War artillery took the hardest hit, with perhaps more than 100 pieces scrapped. In September 1942, 97-year-old Union Army veteran John M. Mullen, last survivor of the Grand Army of the Republic post in Chico, California, gave his consent to scrap four old cannons. Owned by the GAR, the guns had been displayed in a local cemetery and on children's playgrounds. In Indiana, the Pike County Historical Society let the town of Petersburg sell an old cannon that stood by the courthouse. Metal from the gun yielded \$37.92, and the proceeds went to the county war chest.

The WPB also looked to federal historic sites. Gettysburg National Military Park was reluctant to give up guns from the 1860s, but staffers did survey the inventory. Eventually the park turned over 14 iron artillery pieces, 73 bronze cannons, and 750 artillery shells. Easing the loss was the fact that these guns and shells, while looking authentic for display purposes, actually dated from after the Civil War. The park managed to keep its Civil War-era guns, as well as its statues and metal plaques.

In McAllen, Texas, a pair of horseshoes once worn by a horse ridden by Confederate General Robert E. Lee turned up in a scrap

in demand, especially those containing nickel. Old metal hitching posts, no longer needed for horses, made for tempting targets. At the Saulpaugh Hotel in Mankato, Minnesota, the manager sawed off the tops off 70 steel beds and tossed them in a collection pile.

Some Americans made very personal, one-of-a-kind contributions. In Charlotte, North Carolina, professional weight lifter Charles P. Kimbro announced in October 1942 that he would use sandbags in future performances. He donated all 500 pounds of his weights for the scrap drive. That same year, Philadelphia policeman and amateur pilot Joseph Campbell took his plane up into the sky one last time. Then, landing on a paved road near a scrap collection depot, he taxied to a stop by the scrap pile and left the plane there.

YOU COULDN'T SAY "CRIME DOESN'T PAY" when it came to scrap metal drives. Police in Newton, Massachusetts, on the outskirts of Boston, contributed more than 300 unidentified old keys, many confiscated from burglars arrested in the town. A call for contributions from bootleggers in Spalding County, Georgia, brought in six moonshine stills. The United Press news agency reported that the federal building in Detroit



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NATIONAL ARCHIVES

If these young salvagers in Roanoke, Virginia (left), look glum, perhaps it's because their pony cart includes toys—even a pedal-powered truck. Kids everywhere dove into scrap-gathering, and it made a difference. Nine-year-old Mike Neibur of Dallas, Texas (right), flattens cans gathered from his neighbors. He was part of a block-by-block salvage effort that increased the city's tin can harvest by 400 percent.

drive. They dated from Lee's days as a US Cavalry lieutenant colonel at Fort Ringgold in the late 1850s.

Many an old statue fell victim to the hunger for scrap metal. *The Genius of Connecticut*, an allegorical classical-style female figure with wings, originally adorned the dome of Connecticut's capitol. Made of bronze, standing 17 feet 10 inches high, the statue was created in 1878 by sculptor Richard Rogers. After the Great Hurricane of 1938 damaged the capitol, fears that the three-and-a-half-ton statue would plunge off its perch led officials to move it to the basement. No one seemed to know what to do with it, so it was donated as scrap in 1942. (The original plaster model survives and is on display in the capitol.)

## From Keys to Cuspidors

IT SEEMED THAT ANY KIND OF metal, from any source, was fair game. Brass spittoons in hotels and government buildings went for scrap, sometimes replaced with ceramic cuspidors. Old keys were

turned in 150 pounds of brass padlocks that had once sealed speakeasies raided during Prohibition. Inmates on Alcatraz Island assisted San Francisco-area collection efforts by loading a barge with nearly 50 tons of scrap metal (plus rubber and three tons of wool) gathered at their notorious federal prison.

An early 20th-century high school prank briefly became national news. Back in 1908, someone had stolen the clapper from the school's bell in Lamar, Colorado. Thirty-four years later, in 1942, the mystery was solved—a news report stated that a "sheepish businessman" donated the clapper to the local scrap drive.

## Machines, Mines, Rails, and Bridges

AUTHORITIES NOTICED THAT all the Civil War cannons and statues across the nation were a drop in the bucket compared to several other vast sources of unwanted iron and steel. Farmyards, fields, and woods, for instance, contained countless tons of iron and steel in the form of obsolete tractors and machinery, broken tools, and





NATIONAL ARCHIVES

In Wisconsin, an American Legion official presents a young scrap gatherer with a model B-17—one of America's aluminum-skinned heavy bomber aircraft—after a massive aluminum drive in Central County, Wisconsin. The scrap was delivered to the state capitol in Madison.

unused or abandoned cars and trucks. America's industrial and mining heritage also offered nearly endless sources of metal. Near Helena, Montana, army demolition teams went to work on giant pieces of abandoned mining machinery, hoping to reap an estimated 1,000 tons of iron and steel.

Abandoned railroads yielded tons of steel rails and fittings. One stretch of rail that went to the scrap pile came from one of the most important spots in railroading history: Promontory Summit, Utah. It was there on May 10, 1869, amid much ceremony, that the Golden Spike was driven to join the rails of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroads, thereby completing the first transcontinental railroad. In 1904, a new rail route overshadowed a long stretch of the original tracks, including the place where the Golden Spike had been driven. By early 1942, no more than one train a week used the old track. Its rails and spikes were a tempting source of iron for the WWII effort. Consequently, on September 8, 1942, a Reverse Golden Spike ceremony was held on the same spot as the 1869 event. Then contractors tore up 120 miles of track, yielding 13,000 tons of iron for the US Navy.

Remnants of one 1940 disaster also went to scrap dealers. The mile-long Tacoma Narrows Bridge in Washington State was hard-

ly completed when it earned the nickname Galloping Gertie because it swayed alarmingly in strong winds. On November 7, four months after opening day, high winds sent the bridge into an uncontrollable, wildly twisting dance until it fell apart and plunged into the Puget Sound, all caught on a famous piece of amateur film. Wreckage from the bridge and its badly damaged supports was cut into pieces small enough to haul to scrapyards.

**A**LTHOUGH 1942 MARKED the high point of America's WWII scrap metal drives, the nation's steel mills continued to need materials for war production all the way to Japan's surrender. By then, US industry had churned out nearly 300,000 military aircraft, 41 billion bullets, 86,000 tanks, and almost 2.5 million military trucks. Millions of large and small contributions from America's attics, farms, parks, courthouse greens, and junkyards—and even a few artifacts from the nation's historic past—had helped make it possible. ★

DAVID A. NORRIS of *Wilmington, North Carolina*, writes frequently for America in WWII on topics as wide-ranging as the March 1944 eruption of Mount Vesuvius to GI beer and FDR's dog.

# THE 700-MILE AIR RAID

Nine hours was an eternity  
in a fighter cockpit.  
The emptiness between Iwo Jima and Japan wore a pilot down.  
Then came the enemy planes.

by Robert F. Dorr



**T**WENTY-FIVE TO 35 WAS about the number of missions America's WWII bomber pilots flew before returning home. Fighter pilots often flew 100 or more. The mission tallies were quite different for the VLR (very long range) fighter pilots based on Iwo Jima. Those men flew just a handful. But each was a long ordeal full of peril created not only by the enemy, but also by monotony, human frailty, and the unforgiving Pacific Ocean.

For a few short months in 1945, the VLR fighter pilots flew what at that time were the longest missions of their kind, escorting and protecting B-29 Superfortresses on the way to drop hell-fire on Japan's home islands. Whenever a P-51 Mustang or P-47 Thunderbolt pilot took off from Iwo Jima bound for Japan, he faced a trip of up to 700 miles each way, a round-trip stretch of as many as nine uninterrupted hours in the cockpit. Such distances and durations, greater than any flown in Europe, were mentally and physically exhausting. Fatigue set in long before the pilot even reached enemy territory.

Such demanding missions would have been "a challenge to the very best," said former US Air Force historian Richard Hallion in an interview for this article. Yet there was nothing extraordinary about the VLR fighter pilots on Iwo Jima. They were everyday American citizen-soldiers and typical fliers, drawn from the same personnel pool as military pilots everywhere. They flew few mis-

sions because their portion of the war was relatively brief. But they were taxed to the limit.

It was "demanding beyond belief," said First Lieutenant Raymond "Whitey" Betner. A twenty-something from the village of Hoosick Falls, New York, Betner was a P-51 Mustang pilot who was on Iwo for the full duration of the VLR missions, from April 7 to Japan's surrender on August 15, 1945. His experiences were similar to those of the 200 or so other fighter pilots who flew to Japan, to "the Empire," as they called it. Betner took off for eight VLR missions, but for one of these he was held in reserve, and he had to abort three others. So he completed just four.

Eight missions in all, four completed—those aren't big numbers. But as Betner wrote to his parents, "These missions could last eight hours. They were a test of navigation because they were almost entirely over water—a different situation from the war in Europe. They were a test of your skills against Japanese flak and fighter pilots but also of airmanship. But above all, they were a test of simple and sheer endurance because when you landed after eight hours in the cockpit you were so stiff and sore they had to pull you out...."

The expression "hurry up and wait" elicits a knowing nod from anyone who ever wore a military uniform. To some extent, VLR missions were like that—"hours of monotony interrupted by fear-





Flying a 1,400-mile round trip over open sea was risky for VLR (very long range) Mustang fighter pilots, who flew from Iwo Jima to escort B-29 bombers to Japan. Each fighter pilot had to stay awake, fly (a demanding job in a Mustang), and navigate—alone. It was easy to get lost, run out of fuel, and vanish. So VLR pilots relied on the B-29s, which had multi-man crews, plenty of fuel, and greater stability. This group of P-51D Mustangs is getting navigation help from a B-29 (partly visible above) on the return from a June 26, 1945, mission.

US ARMY. COURTESY OF ROBERT F. DORR

ful moments of fighting,” as Betner put it. But even during the slow moments, navigating over the seemingly endless ocean, the pilots had to maintain constant focus. There was never a moment to relax.

### A Shaky Start

THE UNITED STATES WAS the only belligerent in World War II to have the luxury of taking its time to prepare a pilot for battle. Betner went through more than a year of training before strapping into a P-51. After that, he and the other members of his squadron spent fully two years living and flying in the American territory of Hawaii. By the time they reached the war zone and prepared for their first combat, they were already among the more experienced fighter pilots in the world.

Betner was seething with impatience to reach the war. At comfortable stateside and Hawaiian locations, he'd logged more than 900 hours in three fighters: the P-39 Airacobra, P-47 Thunderbolt, and P-51 Mustang. He was ready. And on Iwo Jima, where his squadron was assigned for duty, he would be put to the test.

Iwo Jima (literally “Sulfur Island”) was a barren moonscape of volcanic rock in the northwest Pacific. From February 19 through March 26, 1945, the US Marine Corps fought the costliest battle in its history for this eight-square-mile piece of land that was left reeking with the stench of death—“treeless and heartless,” one marine said. Iwo Jima had temporarily become the most valuable real estate on earth.

On March 6, 1945, just three weeks after the marines had landed, Mustangs began touching down on Iwo Jima's South Field, in the shadow of Mount Suribachi. The P-51s were at the tip of the island's spear, the closest the Allied island-hopping campaign in the Pacific had come to Japan. From there, the fighters could accompany B-29 Superfortress heavy bombers to the Japanese homeland.

The first P-51s to arrive belonged to Betner's unit, the 47th Fighter Squadron of the VII Fighter Command's 15th Fighter Group. Bulldozers were pushing Japanese bodies into grotesque piles when the first P-51 landed. VII Fighter Command boss Brigadier General Ernest M. “Mickey” Moore's Mustang threw up clouds of dust and slowed to a comfortable halt. Next came Major John A. Piper, the 47th Squadron commander. He landed and taxied to a stop, eyed by curious marines.

The third Mustang to land on Iwo was Betner's. By pure chance, Moore and Piper had missed a soft spot on the runway—a pothole. But one of Betner's landing wheels found it and dug in.

His plane spun around, and its left main landing gear collapsed, throwing off a tire that rolled away beyond the tip of the 37-foot wing. The 2,600-horsepower Merlin V-12 engine chopped into the ground, making a terrible clatter and bending the tips of the plane's 11-foot-2-inch four-blade Hamilton Standard propeller.

Battered by the abrupt impact, Betner escaped from his cockpit to find a one-star general urging him not to blame himself. “I'm just glad it wasn't me,” Moore told the 22-year-old Betner in a comforting tone. Flight surgeon Captain Jack Lapidès checked Betner over and proclaimed him innocent in the mishap and fit to fly.

### On to the Empire

BY THE END OF MARCH 1945, two Mustang fighter groups were bedded down on Iwo Jima: the 15th at South Field and the 21st at Central Field. Soon a third, the 506th, also took up station at South Field.

The pilots began their stay on Iwo Jima by flying local missions to support marines who were still battling for the island. They also attacked the Japanese bastion on Chichi Jima 150 miles north, where Susaki Airfield was a key target. Betner wrote home about fitting his Mustang with two 500-pound bombs and a full load of 1,880 rounds of ammunition for his six Browning M2 .50-caliber machine guns and assaulting the Japanese redoubt at Chichi. First Lieutenant Beaver Kinsel took off on one of these missions and disappeared, the first P-51 pilot to die in the far western Pacific and the first of many to succumb to the stresses of extended flight over water.

On March 26, 1945, P-51 pilots were swept into one of the final ground battles on Iwo Jima. That day, Japanese troops swarmed out of caves to make a banzai attack on the tents of the 21st Fighter Group's officers. It was a land battle between hardened, disciplined Japanese soldiers and American fliers who'd never really trained for ground combat. Eyeball-to-eyeball with Japanese troops, the US pilots fought back frantically using hastily grabbed carbines, M1 Garand rifles, and even hand grenades. Fourteen members of the 21st Fighter Group lost their lives in the loud, chaotic point-blank firefight. Others were wounded. Major Sam Hudson, commander of the 531st Squadron, lost three fingers, had to be evacuated, and was not deemed able to fly again until after the war. Betner was fortunate; his 15th Fighter Group wasn't involved in the fight.

Four missions punctuated Betner's first month on Iwo: one bombing run on Iwo Jima and three strafing and bombing mis-



PHILIP SARGOOD, COURTESY OF ROBERT F. DORR

Above: Captain Raymond “White” Betner, seen posing with a trainer back in flight school, got a rough introduction to life as a VLR pilot. He cracked up his Mustang landing on Iwo Jima for the first time. It wasn't his fault; there was a hidden soft spot on the runway. Opposite: The rough landing on Iwo looped Betner's P-51D-20-NA around, bent the propeller blades, and broke off the left main landing gear.



## THE 700-MILE AIR RAID by Robert F. Dorr

sions to Chichi Jima. But the big event—the one all the fliers were waiting for—came on April 7, 1945. That day, all six squadrons of the 15th and 21st Fighter Groups, about 110 Mustangs in all, set off on the first-ever VLR mission, escorting B-29s to Tokyo.

In a sky filled with Mustangs, 17 pilots, including Betner, aborted their flights for various reasons. The others set off on a journey fraught with peril. The longer-legged B-29s could reach Japan from three more-distant islands in the Marianas: Guam, some 1,600 miles from the target, and Saipan and Tinian, both about 1,500 miles. The Iwo Jima-based Mustang pilots faced a shorter but more arduous journey, eight to nine hours alone, strapped into the cockpit of a fighter that required constant attention, flying almost entirely over water toward a heavily defended target. Richard Hallion noted the challenges: “an aircraft that required hands-on

credit for this, the first US Army Air Forces downing of an enemy aircraft over Japan.

According to an official report, the two P-51 pilots then encountered a single Ki-44 Shoki (Demon), or Tojo fighter, approaching from 12 o'clock. Down made a 180-degree overhead pass to stern and opened fire with his Mustang's six guns at about 700 feet. He closed to within 50 feet and hit the Ki-44's canopy and engine. The enemy plane fell away in flames. Down was credited with the kill.

**M**EANWHILE, FIRST LIEUTENANT Eurich Bright overtook a Ki-100 fighter from the rear, opened fire, and set it aflame. Major (later Colonel) James Tapp, soon to become the first VLR ace, shot down four Japanese fighters and was awarded the



US ARMY. COURTESY OF ROBERT F. DORR

control (no time to relax), not a great weather aircraft, liquid-cooled engine, danger of combat damage, need for absolutely pinpoint navigation—just amazing to think they did it.”

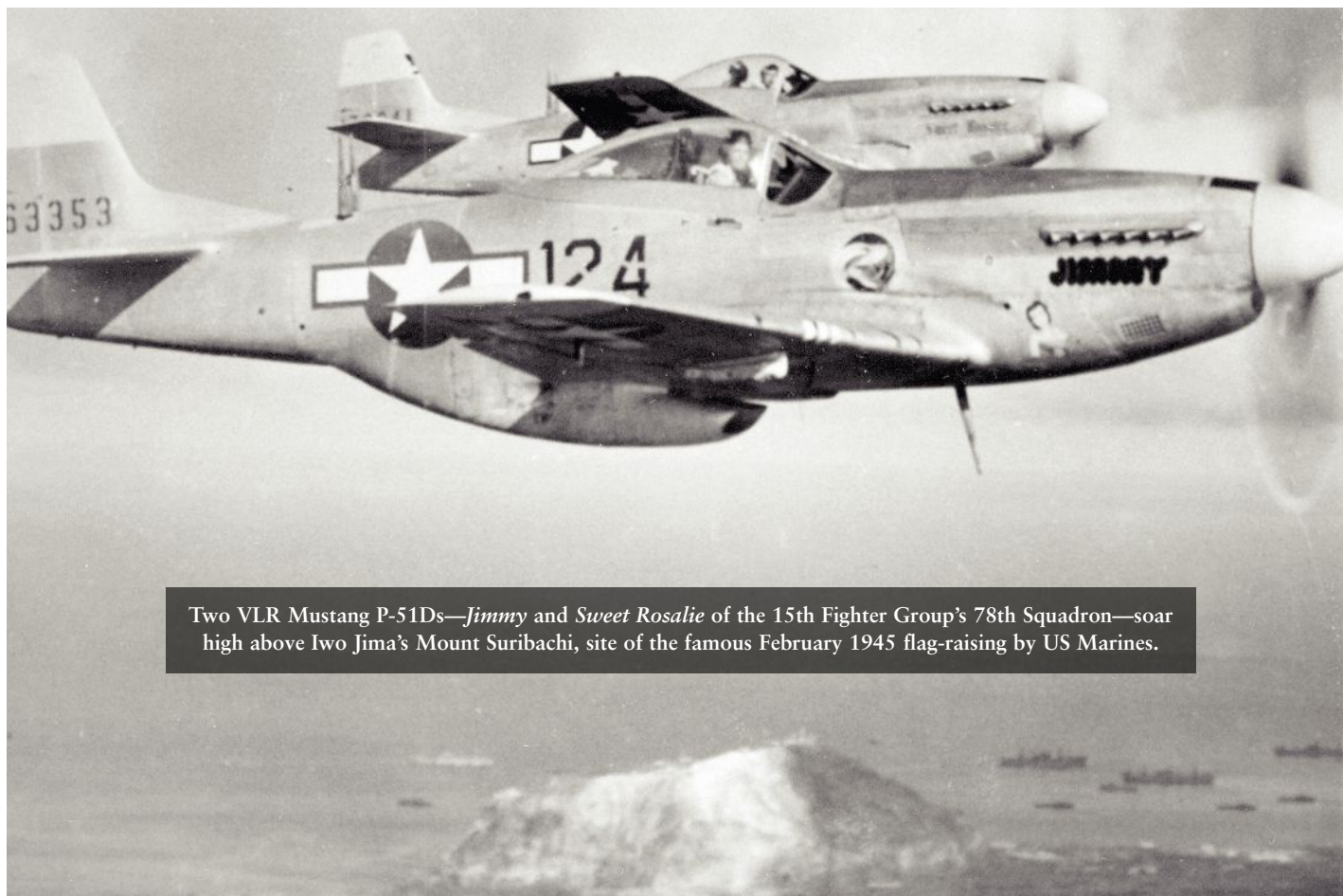
The VLR pilots who reached Japan on April 7 got caught up in raging dogfights. Flak from anti-aircraft guns on the ground claimed two B-29 bombers, and enemy fighters shot down a third. But the fighter-versus-fighter portion of the battle didn't go so well for the Japanese, whose fighters engaged the P-51s head-on.

### The Japanese Fighters

IN THAT FIRST FIGHT ON APRIL 7, Mustang pilots were credited with shooting down 21 Japanese aircraft. Captain Bob Down and First Lieutenant Dick Hintermeier of the 47th Fighter Squadron took turns firing bursts at a twin-engine Ki-45 Toryu (Dragon Slayer), or Nick, setting it aflame and sending it plunging earthward, tumbling wing over wing. Down and Hintermeier shared

Distinguished Service Cross, the second-highest US award for valor. The citation for Tapp's award tells the tale:

*As the bombers approached the target, great numbers of enemy aircraft rose to intercept the formation. Major Tapp unhesitatingly engaged a large group of enemy fighter planes, destroying one and dispersing the others. Returning to the escort position, he observed a lone B-29 with two engines shot away, under attack by an enemy fighter. Instantly, Major Tapp sped to the bomber's defense and destroyed the attacking plane. The crippled bomber, with its small escort, was then attacked by a flight of eight enemy aircraft. Displaying extraordinary courage and airmanship, Major Tapp engaged the numerically superior enemy, destroying one and routing the others, preventing further damage to the distressed bomber. After the B-29s had released their bombs over the target, Major Tapp sighted another enemy aircraft. Giving chase, he*



Two VLR Mustang P-51Ds—*Jimmy* and *Sweet Rosalie* of the 15th Fighter Group's 78th Squadron—soar high above Iwo Jima's Mount Suribachi, site of the famous February 1945 flag-raising by US Marines.

US ARMY: COURTESY OF ROBERT F. DORR

*again engaged the enemy to destroy his fourth enemy plane in approximately twelve minutes of combat.*

It's not always clear in combat stories and reports exactly what types of enemy fighters were involved. Reports of the April 7 action, brought home by Betner after the war, list Japanese aircraft using the names by which Americans knew them: Nick, Tojo, Tony, Jack, and Zeke. The VLR pilots were highly trained and experienced, but it's not certain that they could really distinguish similar Japanese aircraft types from one another—a Ki-61 Hien (Swallow), for instance, from the closely related Ki-100, both dubbed Tony by the Allies. One report in Betner's cache refers to a "gull-winged Jap fighter," but the Japanese had no aircraft with this wing configuration usually identified with the American F4U Corsair.

Many a Japanese fighter went on record simply as "Zero." The name applied specifically, and only, to the Mitsubishi A6M fighter used by the Japanese navy, but most Americans didn't realize that or didn't care. Tapp, who in an interview for this article called Iwo Jima "the hellhole of creation," acknowledged that US pilots weren't always adept at identifying Japanese aircraft types. "We used the word Zero to mean any fighter," he said.

### Over the Empire

BETNER MADE IT TO the Japanese home islands for the first time on April 12, 1945, and flew subsequent missions on April 19 and 21. By then, VLR Mustangs had been modified for their far-reaching mission with the AN/ARA-8 "Uncle Dog" homing adapter. Uncle

Dog helped with navigation by enabling a Mustang's VHF (very high frequency) radio to follow a homing device mounted aboard a B-29, which was more stable in the air and had radar navigation, a better radio, a large crew, and greater fuel capacity. VLR planners and leaders tried to make certain no P-51 pilot was ever left alone over vast expanses of water. American submarines, destroyers, and PBM Mariner flying boats formed an elaborate rescue network, and a B-29 was always assigned to help with Uncle Dog navigation.

None of that helped Betner on April 12. In the midst of an air battle, he was plagued by radio and blower problems, and his engine was vibrating furiously. He broke away from the Japanese coast and searched in vain for a rescue submarine. He also searched for one of the B-29s assigned to help with navigation, again with no luck. He was finally able to get to the wing of a B-29 bomber and use its navigation to start for home. But 350 miles from Iwo, the bomber crew told him that their plane had to take a shorter route to its own home airfield on Tinian. In an unprecedented act of abandonment, the Superfortress headed off to the southeast, leaving Betner alone in the sky.

THIS WAS THE WORST THING that could happen on a VLR mission—worse than tangling with flak or enemy fighters. There were supposed to be rescue ships and aircraft nearby along the route, but Betner found none. Low on fuel, his engine now wheezing, he began to fear he'd have to bail out at sea with no one around to help. Pilots who did that almost always vanished without a trace.



## THE 700-MILE AIR RAID by Robert F. Dorr



JERRY YELIN, COURTESY OF ROBERT F. DORR

Young, proud, and chafing for action, P-51D Mustang pilots of the 78th Fighter Squadron “Bushmasters” face the camera at a stateside base, perhaps Hamilton Field, California. Their unit’s snake-head logo appears on the jacket of the pilot in the center. Soon these men will move to Hawaii and then Iwo Jima for VLR combat duty, defending the big B-29 Superfortresses on bombing missions to Japan. The many flight hours they put in before entering the theater of war will give them an edge over the Japanese fighter pilots they will face.

Betner was down to 1,000 feet, losing altitude, and feeling “very lonely,” he later said. Then a P-61 Black Widow night fighter from Iwo, flying in daylight, detected him with its air-to-air radar and gave him guidance. As his squadron history relates, he “managed to return to Iwo Jima by his own initiative and the grace of God.”

The day was made doubly memorable because the next day, April 13—April 12 in the States, on the other side of the International Dateline—Franklin D. Roosevelt died and Vice President Harry S. Truman took over as president and commander in chief.

### Final Action

BETNER WROTE HOME that he and his buddies were clearing the sky of Japanese fighters and shooting up airfields. Mustangs had begun hauling high-velocity air-to-ground rockets to Japan and firing them at ground targets.

Betner’s final combat mission to the Empire came on May 19 (his logbook shows aborted flights to Japan on May 24 and 25). He completed his overseas duty shortly before July 7, 1945, when the 414th Fighter Group arrived on Iwo Jima flying P-47N Thunderbolts. This ultra-long-range “wet wing” (featuring fuel tanks inside its wings) N model of the Thunderbolt had rolled out of the factory too late for the war in Europe. The 414th’s VLR sorties from Iwo would be the P-47N’s first combat.

The four Iwo-based fighter groups flew to Japan on August 14, 1945, on their last combat mission. First Lieutenant J.W. “Bill”

Bradbury wrote, “We arrived off the coast of Honshu [Japan’s main island] and joined the bomber stream to escort them over their target. They dropped their bombs, and we went back out over the ocean to join our three [navigator] B-29s. As we joined them and started flying back to Iwo Jima, one of the B-29s had picked up radio transmissions and came on the air saying, ‘Hey fellows, the war’s over.’” Hostilities ended August 15, and the surrender was signed aboard the battleship USS *Missouri* (BB-63) in Tokyo Bay on September 2.

The 54 VLR missions—51 by P-51Ds and 3 by P-47Ns—included 4,244 sorties (individual flights by individual aircraft). VLR pilots claimed 452 Japanese aircraft shot down, at a cost of 130 Mustangs and 6 Thunderbolts lost and 124 pilots killed.

While the VLR groups were flying their final missions, Betner was already back in the States, where he logged a few hours in the P-47N. Promoted to captain before he left the military in late 1945, he returned to Hoosick Falls, telling his sister Phyllis Sargood he never wanted to fly again. The endurance test of the monotonous and dangerous flight from Iwo Jima to homeland Japan and back had taken its toll. But during the brief period when Betner and a small fraternity of VLR pilots were making that flight, they passed the test enough times to put their indelible mark on the war. ★

ROBERT F. DORR is a US Air Force veteran who writes frequently on military aviation topics for America in WWII. He lives in Virginia.





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harrowing flights in a B-24 bomber and somehow made it back to the U.S. Besides the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star, my father cherished this watch because it was a reminder of the best part of the war for any soldier—the homecoming.

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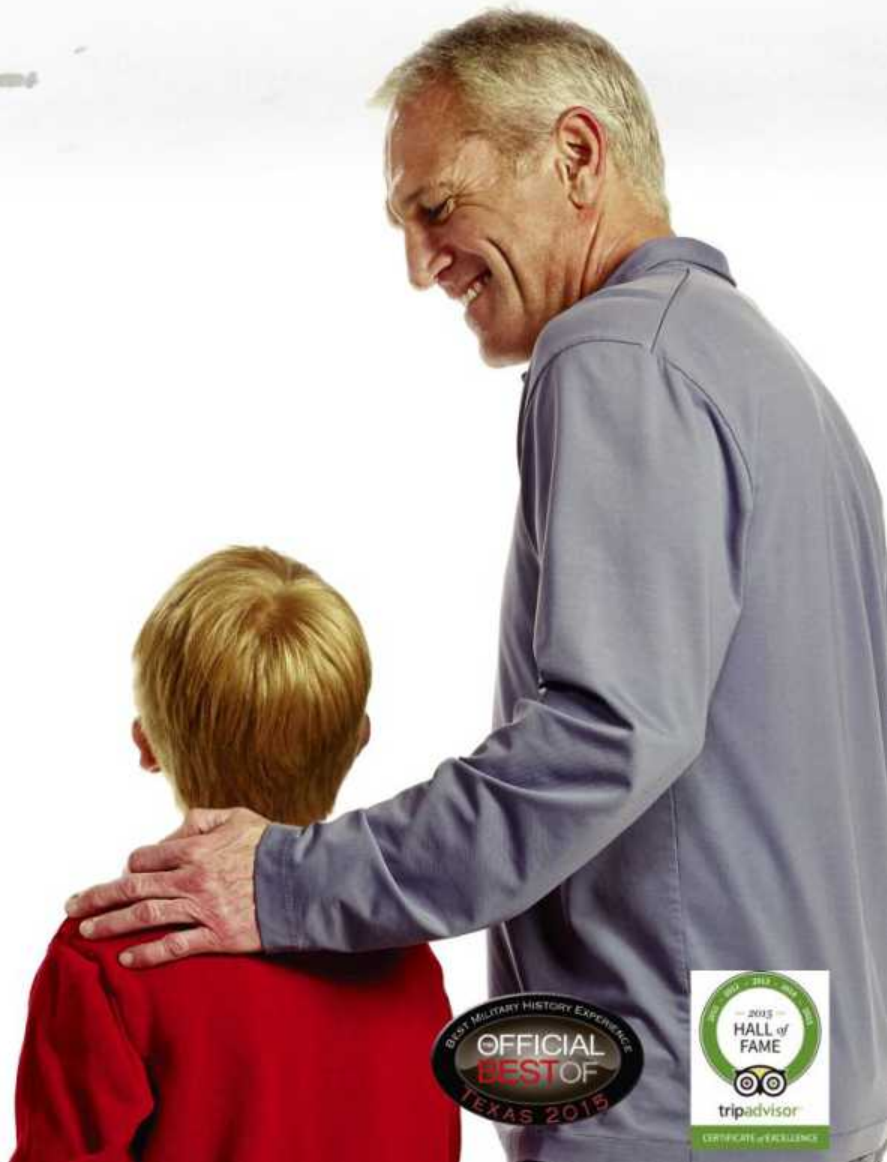
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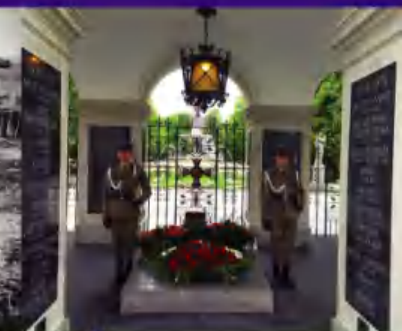


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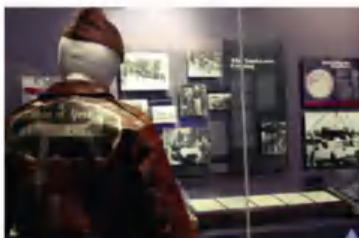
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# A WWII Scrapbook

## A PEARL HARBOR FAMILY

**M**Y FATHER AND my mother (who was a lot younger than my father) were from the same coal-mining town, Mason-town in Fayette County, southwestern Pennsylvania, where I grew up. My father was a 20-year US Navy chief electrician's mate and chief petty officer who retired in 1947, before I was born.

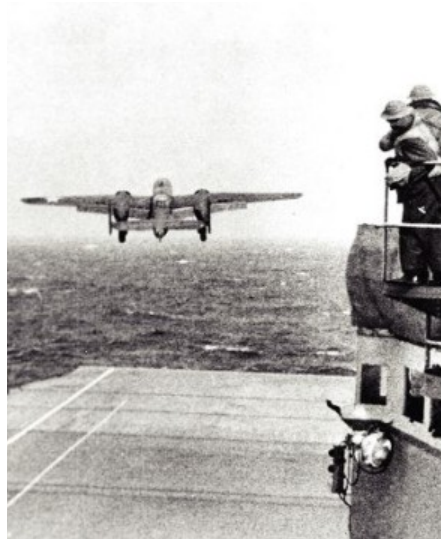
My father had been in China with the USS *Black Hawk* (AD-9) when his mother died in 1940. He returned to Pennsylvania to settle her affairs and met my mother. He then went to his new duty station, San Diego, and my mother eloped and married him.

Then President Franklin D. Roosevelt moved the US Pacific Fleet to Hawaii. My older brother was born in late November 1941 at Tripler Army Hospital in Honolulu. My mother was living at Pearl Harbor when the Japanese attacked on December 7, 1941. As is the Catholic custom with unbaptized babies when death may be near, my mother baptized my brother in the kitchen sink.

I heard many, many stories as a kid about how frightening it was for Pearl Harbor dependent civilians during and after the Japanese attack. My mother told of women keeping big pots of water boiling on their stoves to be used to scald Japanese soldiers they believed would come any moment to rape them.

My father, serving on a destroyer, missed the attack. His and other destroyers, newer faster cruisers, and the aircraft carriers were pulled out of Pearl Harbor before the attack and came back after.

When Admiral Chester Nimitz, who took command in Hawaii, organized a convoy to take civilians back to the main-



NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Joseph Forbes's dad, a Pacific destroyer man, missed the Pearl Harbor raid, but little else. He even saw the Doolittle Raiders take off to bomb Tokyo.

land, my mother wanted to have my brother formally baptized Chester in his honor. My father rejected the idea, saying Chester was a sissy name.

During the convoy back to California, my mother was so fearful of a Japanese torpedo attack that she constantly scanned the water for signs of underwater white torpedo streaks and threw up her food after every meal. When she got back to California, she knelt and kissed the ground.

My mother and brother returned home briefly to Pennsylvania, then went to government housing in Virginia, then to a government trailer park in Texas, and then to an apartment in San Francisco until my father retired. My mother wanted to stay in San Francisco, but my father insisted on returning to Pennsylvania.

Later, when I was a soldier at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, 1973–75, I recalled my mother's interest in the movie and novel by James Jones *From Here to Eternity*, the

story of which took place in Hawaii at the time my mother was living there. By coincidence I lived in the same bay of the same building of Quad D, Schofield Barracks, as James Jones had. But I missed meeting him on a Sunday in the summer of 1973 when he made an unannounced, sentimental return trip to Schofield Barracks before he died.

My father saw a lot of action on his destroyer in the Pacific. I recall as a kid hearing him talk about battles such as Midway [June 1942] and Savo Island [August 1942]. His destroyer was to the right of the aircraft carrier [USS *Hornet* (CV-8)] from which the April 1942 Tokyo Raid was launched, and he watched the B-25 bombers take off.

At Saipan, through binoculars he watched civilians—many clutching children, even babies—jump from cliffs to their deaths because the Japanese had told them horror stories about how the Americans would mistreat them. At Okinawa he was asked to help pick up the bodies of dead Americans.

The physician on my father's destroyer would often use a Bowie knife on wounded sailors to save time, although he was so skilled with a scalpel that he could press two cigarettes together and, with his eyes closed, cut through the paper and tobacco of the top cigarette without cutting the paper of the bottom cigarette.

My father's life was saved by a premonition. He used to check an antenna on his destroyer's smokestack every day at a certain time. One day something kept telling him to wait, so he put off his check. Then a Japanese plane suddenly came out of the clouds and strafed the destroyer, riddling the spot where my father would've been standing if he hadn't followed his premonition.



My father had so many negative memories of the war that he was the only service person from our hometown who declined to submit his name for inclusion on our town's WWII monument. And he did not join the American Legion or the VFW [Veterans of Foreign Wars] until 1970. When the VFW clerk saw my father's war record, he said he was surprised that my father wasn't one of the first to join!

JOSEPH FORBES  
son of WWII chief petty officer and chief  
electrician's mate ANDREW PANSIC, Sr.  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

## GRIDIRON WAR

I ENLISTED IN 1943 after I turned 18. I passed my air force test and became a cadet. At that time, however, the USA had enough pilots, bombardiers, and navigators, and we were winning the war against Hitler's Germany and Tojo's Japan. So I played football at Minter Army Airfield, California [in Shafter].

I had boot camp training in Amarillo, Texas. (As the drill sergeant said, "the nearest place as being overseas.") In Amarillo it could rain, blow sand, and have a hot sun all in one 24-hour day.

When I played football at Minter Field, several of us were offered scholarships at USC and UCLA [the University of Southern California and the University of

California-Los Angeles]. I enrolled at UCLA, then transferred my sophomore year to Brigham Young University. There I played football as a quarterback.

After graduation I attended graduate school at the University of Washington on a scholastic scholarship. I passed a test and entered the US civil service as a career. I married and had four children, two boys and two girls.

JAMES R. ECCLES  
wartime US Army Air Forces cadet and corporal  
Baker City, Oregon

## TRAINED IN THE DESERT, FOUGHT IN THE SNOW

I N MARCH 1942 I was sent by rail to Camp Cooke, California, for training. There were so many rattlesnakes there we had to wear leggings. In July a Jap submarine shelled a coastal oil refinery, and it was held out of the news. [Japanese subs shelled an oilfield at Ellwood, near Santa Barbara, on February 23, 1942.]

My tank unit trained in the Mojave Desert in late 1942, [meaning] we might be going to African desert? Instead we were sent to Tennessee. Then, in July '43, we were sent to Pine Camp, Watertown, New York. In March 1944 we shipped out from a Massachusetts port—for England. Several ships in our convoy were sunk, but we made it to Nuneaton, England. We landed in France in August 1944 and went into action at Saint-Lô.

Soon we thought the war was about over. But December 15, 1944, the German forces made a big breakthrough in Luxembourg and Belgium. In this battle [the Battle of the Bulge] my unit lost a lot of our tanks. German tanks had larger-caliber guns and thicker armor. We lost many close buddies, but we won the battle.

BRUCE D. TERLAND  
wartime corporal, 737th Tank Battalion,  
Third Army, European theater  
Avalon, Wisconsin

Send your War Stories submission, with a relevant photo if possible, to WAR STORIES, America in WWII, 4711 Queen Avenue, Suite 202, Harrisburg, PA 17109, or to [warstories@americainwwii.com](mailto:warstories@americainwwii.com). By sending stories and photos, you give us permission to publish and republish them.



## 1940s GI and civilian patter

**blivit:** anything (or anyone) big and floppy that goes plop when you drop it

**goozlum:** goop masquerading as sauce or gravy—maybe atop a blivit on your plate

**graveyard stew:** a potful conspicuous for its abundance of bones and dearth of meat

# MERRIAM PRESS

Red Legs of the Bulge  
Artillerymen in the  
Battle of the Bulge



Red Legs of the Bulge  
Artillerymen in the Battle of the Bulge  
by C.J. Kelly

During the war, recruits felt lucky to be assigned to the artillery. They figured it was safer than the infantry. With the exception of being a forward observer, they were correct. Although making up 16% of an infantry division's strength, it only accounted for 3% of the casualties.

That situation changed during the Bulge. Battery personnel were some of the first to get hit by enemy shells. The front line came to them as never before. German infantry and tanks bypassed the infantry screen and rolled up on their positions.

The use of artillery reached its zenith in World War II. It accounted for the majority of casualties on the battlefield. The weather in Northern Europe by December 1944 was atrocious, nullifying the Allies' air superiority. So the artillery had to fill that void.

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I WAS THERE

# ‘Things Aren’t Normal at All!’

by Eva Lehman



ALL PHOTOS THE STORY COURTESY OF EVA LEHMAN

**E**VA LEHMAN WAS ABOUT TO TURN 16 when the Second World War came to the United States. Life changed drastically for teenagers just as it did for adults. Living with her mom and dad, Hulda and Jesse Lehman, on East 147th Street in Cleveland, Eva eventually started a wartime journal, writing down occasional thoughts as days and months passed, sometimes not putting pen to paper for long stretches and sometimes flipping back through her pages to add information about events that had previously occurred. Here is that journal, her personal story of blackout drills, sneaking food to the family dog, watching newsreels at the movie theater, visiting an aunt and uncle's farm in the country, and putting together Christmas care packages for the troops.

I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER my sixteenth birthday [December 16, 1941] because right before that, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and things were so different. We [she and her mom and dad] were sitting around the kitchen that Sunday morning when the news was announced on the radio about the Japanese attack in the Pacific. It seemed so underhanded since the Japanese ambassador was in Washington at the time talking to our President.

Everyone on our street is talking about the attack and many of my friends are going to enlist although we are all still in high school. My father is ineligible for military service because of a knife accident as a boy that blinded him in his right eye. But he wants to do his part and so he's volunteered to be the Civil Defense Chief for our

Right: Hulda and Jesse Lehman stand in front of their house on East 147th Street in Cleveland during the war. Left: Their daughter, Eva, was 15, sitting inside with them, when they heard the news of the Pearl Harbor attack. Here, Eva wears the uniform of the Civil Air Patrol. She joined this civilian arm of the US Army Air Forces shortly after graduating high school at 17.



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**3.** Prizes in each weekly contest will be five \$1000 denomination and seventy \$50 denomination U. S. Defense Savings Bonds, all "Series E" (values quoted are maturity value of the Bonds). Bonds may be cashed in any time after 60 days at the redemption value shown in the table on the Bond.

**4.** There will be six weekly contests each with an identical list of prizes. Opening and closing dates:

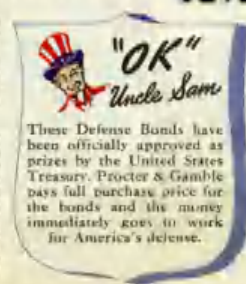
CONTEST	OPENING	CLOSING
First	Now	Saturday, May 30
Second	Sunday, May 31	Saturday, June 6
Third	Sunday, June 7	Saturday, June 13
Fourth	Sunday, June 14	Saturday, June 20
Fifth	Sunday, June 21	Saturday, June 27
Sixth	Sunday, June 28	Saturday, July 4

**5.** Entries received before Saturday, May 30, will be entered in the first week's contest. Thereafter entries will be entered in each week's contest as received. Entries for the final week's contest must be postmarked before midnight, July 4, 1942, and received by July 18, 1942.

**6.** Entries will be judged for originality, sincerity and aptness of thought. The judges' decision will be final. Duplicate prizes will be awarded in case of ties. No entries will be returned. Entries, contents, and ideas therein become the property of Procter & Gamble.

**7.** Any resident of the United States or Hawaii may compete except employees of Procter & Gamble, their advertising agencies, and their families. Contests subject in all Federal, State, and local regulations.

**8.** Names of the winners of the \$1000 Bonds will be announced shortly after the close of each weekly contest over those radio programs: "Right to Happiness"—and immediately following "Pepper Young's Family." All winners will be notified by mail. Complete prize-winner lists will be available after July 31, 1942.



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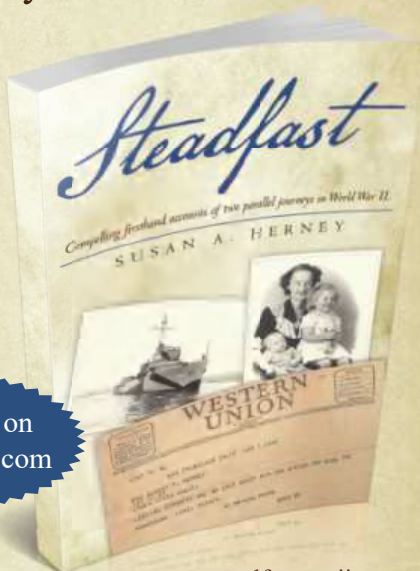
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I WAS THERE

street. He still has his very important job with the Water Department in Cleveland, but now he and Lois' father [Lois was Eva's best friend] check to be sure that all the houses on our street have black curtains for the windows so that no light can come in should there be an air attack [so light wouldn't escape and reveal targets to enemy planes].

My mother sewed black curtains for our house on the electric sewing machine. She had received it as a wedding present years earlier and put the machine to good use now. I think everyone is secretly worried about the Japanese somehow attacking the mainland of the United States. Hence the concern about not having any light visible at night. I watched my mother work. She said this job of hers helps her from thinking too long and hard about what is happening with the war.

Christmas is just around the corner, but we are celebrating more quietly than usual. I got some nylon stockings from my mother and Arpege perfume from my father. We had turkey for Christmas dinner and I gave Rexie [the family dog] scraps of the meat as a special treat. We listened to Christmas carols on the radio all day.

**M**Y FATHER MENTIONED at supper the other night [in December 1942] that he had heard that new cars won't be made anymore until the war is over. He always drove a black Ford and traded it regularly for the newest model; but, no more! Now the iron and steel are being used for the war effort, for tanks, guns and to replace the ships lost at Pearl Harbor last December.

My birthday is here! I am a December girl and got my first pair of high heels! I am the envy of all the girls at my high school [John Adams]. My mother got me some rayon stockings to go with my shoes and I just love to dress up in my new clothes!

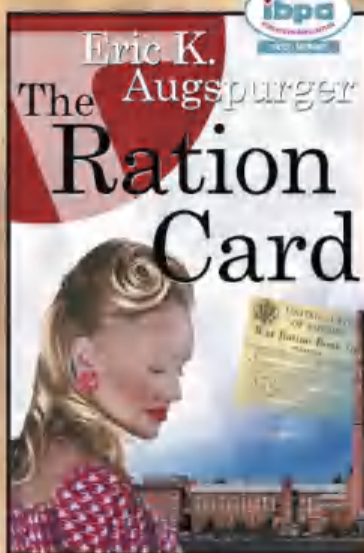
Lois and I went to the movies where we heard more about the war in the newsreels. General Douglas MacArthur lost to the Japanese in the Battle of the Coral Sea in

## Sunday, December 7th

Josephine knew the attack on Pearl Harbor wasn't the cause of all changes to come. But...it did seem as if that was the point where her life branched from what it was to what it became.

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May [1942—the “news” in newsreels was months behind]. After the newsreels, which were kind of depressing, we saw a cowboy movie with Roy Rogers and a *Tom & Jerry* cartoon. My favorite cowboy is Gene Autry and his horse Champion, but Roy wasn’t a bad choice either. We paid 9 cents to see the show so afterward Lois and I went to the local drugstore off of E. 131st Street for a milkshake.

More and more men, some from my high school, are enlisting to fight the Germans in Europe and North Africa. A lot of my friends and their families are spending time at church services, praying for a happy outcome. Everyone writes regularly and the letters go through the A.P.O. [Army Post Office]. It’s important that morale stays high for the soldiers abroad and on the Homefront, too. Lois and I saw another newsreel at the show. It was all about German General Erwin Rommel, who is leading the Axis Powers to victory in North Africa. I think the stress of the war is getting to everyone, since it is all that is on the radio and all anyone talks about, and it seems that the United States and our Allies are losing.

It’s been a while since I wrote in my diary, but today, July 22 [1943], was the beginning of gas rationing in the country [gas rationing had actually begun on the East Coast in May 1942]. Things have been so dark and grim that I haven’t felt like it, but here I am with Rexie in the top bedroom of our house on 147th Street. Because my father works at the Water Department in Cleveland, a “necessary job,” we are getting 8 gallons of gas per week rather than just 4 gallons [the amount allotted to most households].

We are driving to Bluffton, Ohio, this summer to visit our relatives. Since some of my father’s family are farmers, they have plenty of gas [farms received extra rations] and can loan us some to get back to Cleveland. The food my Aunt and Uncle grow is so very important to the soldiers. My father and uncle spent all of their time patching tires in the barn because of the rubber shortage. We made it home in time for the “blackout patrol” to be sure everyone had their black curtains in place and no light showed through the windows. It took some extra time because of the slow speed limits [35 miles per hour] to save on gasoline.

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My mother and I took the bus downtown and found something brand new at Higbee's Department Store—leg make up! We can't get rayon stockings anymore because of the war, or silk either [because silk and rayon were mostly reserved for making parachutes]. Something else that is new—two-piece bathing suits. It's a good time of the year to buy a suit and we are helping the war effort by saving material. Lois' mother said that she "couldn't see how something that was so skimpy to start with would be saving anything much at all!"

Saturday Lois and I saw a very risqué movie at the Avalon [Theatre] with Clark Gable, one of my favorite actors, who came from Cadiz, Ohio. He played a character named Rhett Butler in the movie, which was called *Gone with the Wind*, a story of the Old South during the Civil War. It was so sad, Clark's third wife, Carole Lombard, was killed in an airplane crash when she was traveling around selling war bonds the previous year. Her husband was inconsolable.

Something new can be seen in our neighborhood. Families are putting flags in their



Eva Lehman wears what she called her "Hedy Lamarr dress," a reference to the Austria-born actress and storied beauty (who developed technology used in today's wireless devices).

windows to honor those serving abroad. The flags are red with a blue star and have a V below the star for each serviceman. I think it is so patriotic.

Lois and I saw another older movie besides the war news [the newsreel shown

before a feature film] on Saturday at the matinee. There was a Roy Rogers serial, a cartoon and Alfred Hitchcock's *Rebecca*, a really creepy mystery starring Laurence Olivier. Our movie tickets were only 10 cents and we even got free popcorn!

When I went back to school [back] in September [1942], my school began selling "war stamps." I paid 10 cents for each stamp and pasted it into a book. When the book was full, I turned it in for a \$25.00 war bond. My mother and father think this is a good idea, since I will learn how to save money!

My graduation is coming up in August of 1943. I am just seventeen, but I finished up early and have decided to join the C.A.P. [Civil Air Patrol, a civilian auxiliary of the US Army Air Forces]. I've always wanted to learn to fly a plane and now I will have a chance, since C.A.P. protects our homeland.

I got a job at the telephone company. Jobs are plentiful since so many of the men are away fighting in Europe or the Pacific.... I work five days a week, but on the weekends, I am flying and learning Morse code at the airport [Cleveland

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Municipal Airport]. I am so happy to be learning to fly. I feel like a bird, no longer bound to the earth.

My father is still working for the Water Department. He tells me that the economy is booming and nobody even has to hunt for a job. When our friends say anything else, he snorts and says "Horsefeathers!" to them.

Everyone is trying to keep the holidays as normal as possible this year, when things aren't normal at all! We spent Christmas listening to "White Christmas" on the radio and sending care packages to the men abroad. My father cut our tree from the lot on E. 147th Street and I decorated it with popcorn chains. We had turkey for dinner. I think Rexie liked it best of all since it was a real treat!

Looking back on 1943, I remember several things.... The newsreels at the movies were filled with necessary information, particularly about the ration coupons necessary to buy food. And the rationing books for different grocery items consisted of stamps of different colors: red for meat and cheese, blue for coffee and baked

beans, and white for bread and sugar. I always gave my Rexie a share of the meat, too, since he is so precious to us.

More and more women are now working to help with the gigantic labor shortage caused by the war effort. The Ohio Bell Telephone Company was a big employer in the Northern Ohio area. Salaries averaged 74 cents per hour and a family could buy an entire dinner for 43 cents!

Travel has become nonexistent because of the gas rationing. Lois and I go to the movies; Flash Gordon and Sherlock Holmes are very popular at the box office right now. Afterward, we have an ice cream soda at our local drug store.

Something new has been added to aid "essential industries" and the war effort: salvage drives to collect cans and other used items [so the raw materials could be recycled for military use]. Everyone on our

street is collecting since it is considered the patriotic thing to do.

I remember 1943 as a time of watching and waiting and praying. Church attendance has risen as many people turn to God for help. Many lives have been changed forever, yet all of us feel a determination. Our country must win this war because the consequences of losing are unthinkable.

It is 1944 and the salvage drives are continuing as everyone on our street dutifully collects scrap iron and waste. Everyone at my school is busy writing letters to servicemen abroad which are mailed to the F.P.O. [Fleet Post Office] to the sailors in the Navy who collected them when their ships docked in port. All anyone talks about is the war effort, as lives are changed, careers are put on hold, and parents anxiously wait for news of their sons abroad. The movies have gotten into the act with a series of shows starring John Wayne and Tyrone Power plus the greatest war movie of all time, *Casablanca*, with Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman. I cried when Rick left Ilsa at the end to return to fighting for what he believed to be right. The latest news is

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Heidi Kushlan (signed), CEO, 10/1/2015.

also at the theatre when the newsreels are shown at the beginning of each show.

Since rubber and chocolate candy come from the islands in the Pacific controlled by the Japanese, there have been gigantic cut-backs in these two products. Cocoa just isn't available.

When Lois and I aren't going to the show, we go to the local bowling alley. Pinsetters set up the pins each time we knock them over, making strikes and spares. Afterwards, we go for Cokes at the local drugstore.

This summer our family is making a trip to Euclid Beach Park [at Lake Erie]. My mother bought a whole strip of tickets for the rides at a nickel a ride. My favorites are the high roller coaster, the Thriller; the Flying Scooters; and also the Racing Horses. My mother likes the rocket ships. We all stuffed on hot dogs and a specialty of the park, the frozen custard.

Sugar is...rationed and newsprint is being considered, but this is all worth it since the news from the front lines is better. General George Patton has pushed the Germans out of Italy and in June, Rome was liberated. The landing at Normandy [also in June] marked the beginning of the end for Germany. The Allies advanced on Berlin by the end of this year.

My friends and I carried balloons and posters in a parade on Independence Day. I am making popcorn balls and carved a pumpkin, home-grown from our very own garden for Halloween. My mother and I packed fruitcakes, candy and cookies to send to the troops for Christmas.

It has been a long year but we on the Homefront are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel. More of my friends from high school are enlisting and church attendance has reached an all time high. Everyone is hoping and praying for good news for the Allies in 1945.

Charles Dickens said that "it was the best of times, it was the worst of times." In certain ways this is true of 1945. Jobs are so plentiful, that necessary occupations like my father's job at the Water Department have "frozen" the employees in place. Plus they are working double and triple shifts! I'm working at the Ohio Bell Telephone Company but there are many opportunities, since the enlisted men are still abroad.

Everyone saves what they can, since



★  
I WAS THERE

some items are so scarce with rationing still going on. Everything is being recycled, paper, metal, even lipstick tubes!

It looks like the American forces are making progress against the Axis. In February our soldiers placed an American flag at Iwo Jima. In Europe the Allied forces are on the march towards Berlin.

The worst day of the war was April 12, 1945, when our wartime President, Franklin Roosevelt, had a massive heart attack. We lost our leader, but our new President, Harry Truman, has promised aggressive action on the Pacific front.

Everyone rejoiced when Germany surrendered on May 8, 1945. Houses in the small German villages had white flags of surrender in each window. Berlin was overrun with American, French and British troops.

The war in the Pacific, unfortunately, is not going as well. The Japanese have vowed to fight to the bitter end and it looks like many American lives will be lost



Eva Lehman visits the Cleveland Municipal Airport with her dad and daughter after the war. The airport served as the base for her wartime Civil Air Patrol unit.

before our enemy surrenders. American bombers are blanketing the island night and day, but the Japanese aren't going to quit. Lois and I went to the theatre to see the newsreel, but the situation in the Pacific doesn't look good.

August 6, 1945, is the day of reckoning for Japan. A massive bomb was dropped on a city called Hiroshima. We listened on the radio as the announcer heralded this as the start of something called the Atomic

Age. Many of the Japanese people ignored the thousands of leaflets that the allies had dropped telling them to leave because the city was going to be bombed.

Unfortunately the Japanese still didn't surrender so a second atomic bomb was dropped on another city called Nagasaki, causing massive loss of human life. The leaflets were again ignored so many people died. But Japan has surrendered!

September 2, 1945, is the date that went down in history [as Victory over Japan Day, or V-J Day]. There are wild celebrations everywhere and parades are being held in Cleveland to honor the soldiers, who are finally coming home! Rationing is over, hopefully forever!

The newsreels show the surrender of the Japanese to the American forces. On the Homefront many people have gone to their local churches to pray. Cars are out of storage as tires and gasoline become more available again.

People weep for those who will not be coming home. Some soldiers are missing arms, legs, or have other serious injuries. Yet the war has ended as our new President, Harry Truman, will meet with other leaders of the Allied countries to try and establish a lasting peace. The organization to perform this Herculean task has been called the United Nations. Our country, according to the newsreels, will be a member of the Security Council, a prominent position, along with England, France, Soviet Russia, and China.

And so it is over, the war to end all wars. It feels strange in a way that all anyone has thought about or spoken of at long last is ended. We can go on with our lives and yet this time, these four years, will live on in our memories, never to be forgotten.

*THE YEAR AFTER THE WAR ENDED, Eva got married and, in 1947, had a daughter, Linda. In 1951, Eva, now divorced, moved with her parents and Linda from Cleveland to Parma, Ohio, considered the countryside at the time. They remained there until 1958, when they settled in nearby Northfield. ★*

EVA LEHMAN lives in Northfield, Ohio, with her daughter, Linda Masek, a fifth-grade teacher and author of seven books who submitted this journal kept by her mother to America in WWII.

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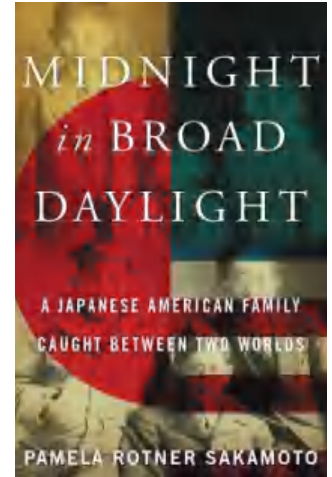
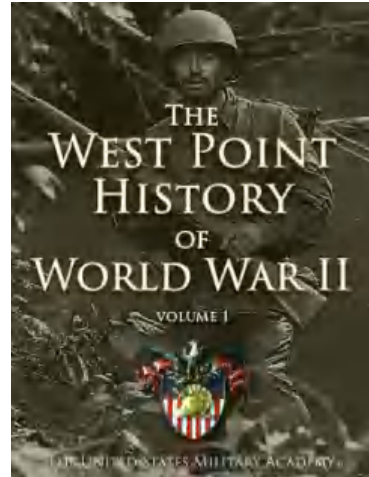
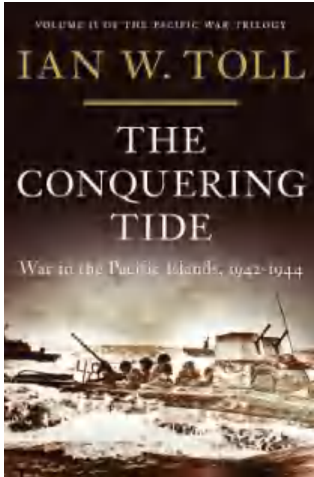


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### The Conquering Tide: War in the Pacific Islands, 1942-1944

by Ian W. Toll, Norton, 622 pages, \$35

IAN W. TOLL'S FIRST BOOK on the Pacific theater of World War II, *Pacific Crucible* (2012), gave no indication that there would be a sequel—other than the fact that it covered only the buildup to the war and the first six months of hostilities in 1941 and 1942. The book's blend of grand strategic overview, well-written battle narratives, and dramatic first-person accounts left readers wanting more. *The Conquering Tide* is an excellent follow-up and, better yet, it promises a third volume to complete the trilogy. It naturally builds on events covered in the first book, but a reader can still enjoy it on its own.

Toll writes that he uses naval campaigning “as the narrative spine” for this series on the history of the Pacific War. The land battles were important, but only to the extent that various island bases could be used by the Americans or Japanese to launch air and sea power, and it was those considerations that drove strategic decisions. More broadly, Toll writes that his intention is to incorporate several distinct points of view: “Allied and Japanese perspectives of the conflict, the home fronts

and battle fronts, the highest levels of political and military leadership, and the perspectives from the decks, trenches, and cockpits.” Weaving all these elements together, *The Conquering Tide* tells not only what happened and when, but also why it happened and how people felt about it at the time.

The book opens roughly two weeks after the June 1942 Battle of Midway, with Allied strategists working to develop high-level plans for the next phase of the war. President Franklin Roosevelt had agreed to the Europe First strategy espoused by the British, which had the United States taking a defensive posture in the Pacific while devoting the bulk of its resources to fighting Germany. Admiral Ernest King, commander of the US Fleet, realized that a purely defensive strategy would benefit the Japanese. He convinced US Chief of Staff General George Marshall of this, and the two of them then persuaded the other Allies that a 70-30 Europe-Pacific split of forces was appropriate. King then gave orders that launched an August 1942 counter-attack in the Solomon Islands that became known as the Battle of Guadalcanal.

Toll's descriptions of battles read in many ways like a war novel. He includes Japanese and American first-person ac-

counts from admirals down to ordinary seamen and marines. His writing is not only gripping, but also clear, making it easy to understand exactly what is happening and why. He offers a wide strategic context, for instance, for the rarely explained decision to withdraw the US carrier fleet from Guadalcanal two days after the landings there. Further aiding his presentation are maps that complement the text and help readers keep track of individual battles and the overall island-hopping campaign.

Toll gives the same detailed treatment to each major action from mid-1942 to mid-1944: Operation Galvanic (Tarawa), Operation Flintlock (Kwajalein Atoll), the aerial raid on Truk, the invasion of Saipan, the Battle of the Philippine Sea (also known as the Marianas Turkey Shoot) followed by landings on Guam and Tinian islands, and the US pursuit of the Japanese fleet following the Turkey Shoot. Additionally, a chapter in the middle of the book gives a very good account of the American submarine war. General Douglas MacArthur, the US Army, and the Australian Army are featured throughout, though their actions in the New Guinea campaign do not get the same level of detail as the primarily naval actions listed above.

Voices of the men in the Japanese mili-

★  
BOOKS  
AND MEDIA

tary and civilians at home in Japan receive nearly as much space as voices of Americans, which emphasizes the basic humanity of both sides. The reader gets improved context for understanding Japanese behavior and decision-making during this phase of the war. Toll vividly contrasts Japan's decreasing oil reserves and drastically decreasing manpower (especially aviators) with America's ever-increasing resources.

In the end, *The Conquering Tide* makes a good case that Japan lost the war in 1944. American submarines were sinking more vessels than Japan could produce. There was no way Japan could muster enough oil, food, munitions, or skilled pilots to beat back the Allied advances, much less sustain a major assault. Toll's epilog helps explain why, despite the obvious futility, Japan was unwilling to stop fighting and would resort to increasingly desperate tactics in the war's final year.

*The Conquering Tide* is an excellent study of the Pacific war, and I look forward to reading the final installment in this series.

DREW AMES  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

**Disciples: The World War II Missions of the CIA Directors Who Fought for Wild Bill Donovan**

by Douglas Waller, Simon and Schuster, 570 pages, \$30

AS THE AUTHOR of *Wild Bill Donovan*, a biography of the founder and wartime head of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), Douglas Waller is no stranger to the byzantine intricacies of spy craft. In

his new book, *Disciples*, Waller digs deeper and details the wartime careers of Donovan's four most notable lieutenants: Allen Dulles, William Colby, Richard Helms, and William Casey. Though the reputations of these men were later tarnished by Cold War controversy, here we see them early in their long careers, when they were driven by dedication, ingenuity, audacity, and bravery.

Waller begins with the prewar experiences of Dulles's men and writes of their various entrances into the shadow world. He follows each one learning the craft of

★ THEATER OF WAR

**Watch on the Rhine**

*Directed by Herman Shumlin, written by Dashiell Hammett from the play by Lillian Hellman, starring Bette Davis, Paul Lukas, Geraldine Fitzgerald, Lucile Watson, Beulah Bondi, George Coulouris, 1943, 114 minutes, black and white, not rated.*

HOLLYWOOD WAS initially reluctant to address the rise of Adolf Hitler. When it finally did, Warner Brothers was at the forefront. Its *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* was the first studio film to take on the Nazis, so it's probably no surprise that Warner was also the studio that made *Watch on the Rhine*, a story about the shadow of Nazism following a resistance fighter into the seeming safe haven of the United States. Of course, it helped that the movie was adapted from a proven property, Lillian Hellman's successful Broadway play. And by the time the movie reached theaters in 1943, America hardly needed any reminders about the threat of the Nazis.

Kurt Muller (Paul Lukas, in an Oscar-

winning role); his wife, Sara (Bette Davis); and their three precocious children are traveling from Europe to the United States via Mexico. They seem tense during the border crossing, but make it onto a train without incident. There, an inquisitive traveler asks Kurt what he does. "I fight against fascism," Kurt says. "That is my trade."

The family is on its way to Sara's childhood home on the outskirts of Washington, DC. Her widowed mother, Fanny (Lucile Watson), and aunt (Beulah Bondi) have not seen her in 17 years. We learn that Sara, the daughter of a former Supreme Court justice, has been living a somewhat mysterious and peripatetic life with Kurt in Germany, worlds away from the upper-crust existence her domineering mother enjoys in the Washington suburbs.

The family arrives to find a couple—Romanian Count Teck de Brancovis (George Coulouris) and his wife, Marthe (Geraldine Fitzgerald)—there enjoying Fanny's hospitality. The count frequents the German embassy, where he is willing to curry favor by investigating Kurt's true identity. Skulking around the



house, he breaks into Kurt's locked attaché case, where he discovers a large sum of money and a gun. Realizing what's going on, he attempts to extort money from the Mullers in exchange for his silence. Kurt, who is about to return to Europe in an attempt to rescue a fellow resistance fighter, takes matters into his own hands. By so doing, he forces the sheltered American suburbanites to notice the dark shadows that are falling over the world.

Hellman's play opened on Broadway on April 1, 1941, and it had a successful run of 378 performances. To write the screenplay, Hellman encouraged the hir-



the intelligence agent. The details and insight in these sections is particularly rewarding: the psychological tests (and their results), the inculcation into the world of espionage, the skills to penetrate the secrets of others, and the techniques of coercion. In time, each man was ready for field assignments to support different aspects of the war in Europe from peaceful Switzerland to post-Normandy France to occupied Norway.

I was repeatedly surprised by how different the four men were in background, inclination, and personality, as well as how each of them approached his assignments. Dulles ran his operations in Switzerland from a well-appointed office furnished with comfortable chairs and serving gourmet food. He outspent his British counterparts when buying intelligence, casually combined business and pleasure in extramarital affairs, and fought the war in a business suit. Meanwhile, Colby parachuted into

ing of her long-time lover Dashiell Hammett. Warner assigned contract player Davis to star. She asked that Lukas, who was repeating his Broadway role, receive top billing. "While she is willing to do the picture," her lawyer reported, "Lukas has the choice part and she does not want to appear ridiculous by taking the first position billing." The studio, unwilling to downplay one of its most bankable stars, refused her request.

The film version never manages to break free from its theatrical origins, and it remains talky and largely confined to the single setting of the sitting room. Still, it manages to create an air of tension as Kurt realizes what he must do to silence Teck. Lukas delivers a powerful performance, especially when Kurt bids goodbye to his children before returning to Europe and his probable doom. "We've been shaken out of the magnolias," says Sara's mother. The play was still on Broadway when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and millions of Americans experienced much the same feeling.

TOM HUNTINGTON  
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

occupied France, lived with and supplied guerilla groups, drank roasted acorns for coffee, and waged war with OSS headquarters for adequate supplies.

Operating in the open in a neutral country, Dulles waged quite a successful intelligence war against Berlin. Ironically, Adolf Hitler was his best recruiter, and alienated German bureaucrats needed little enticement to divulge secrets. Walk-in recruit Fritz Kolbe of the German foreign service, for example, proved invaluable, traveling to Switzerland many times with purloined Nazi documents and microfilm. Dulles's interpretations of the information gathered were not always on the mark, but his intelligence proved reliable and valuable. Even his competitor allies, the British, came to acknowledge his prowess. Arguably, his most significant accomplishment was negotiating the surrender of Wehrmacht forces in Italy in 1945.

One of the most difficult tasks of the OSS was working with the French Resistance. The underground organization was fractured and fractious, with internal fighting only slightly less violent than that found in Nazis circles. Colby and more than 520 OSS special operations agents were dispatched to support, train, equip, and guide would-be French liberators so they could become a more cohesive fighting force. This wasn't easy, due in part to the relatively low quality of many French fighters. Yet hundreds of OSS agents helped them impede and frustrate Germany's defense against the Allied invasion of France, earning accolades for Colby and others.

An even more difficult task was penetrating the totalitarian Third Reich. Even after Allied forces entered Germany early in 1945, American generals craved reliable intelligence on the strength and disposition of enemy manpower and hardware. Mission logistics were more daunting than in France. There were few safe houses, virtually no support networks, and not many operatives who could pass themselves off without suspicion. Nascent resistance within Germany had been briskly and brutally extinguished by the Gestapo. The quiet, mumbling, audacious Casey took on this infiltration task, building and dispatching mission teams equipped with authentic clothing and accessories, as well

as weapons and spy gear. The results were decidedly mixed.

After Berlin's surrender, Dulles and Helms set up shop in Germany and shifted their focus to the postwar world. They looked for prospective agents, struggled with logistics, and coped with shortages of everything from bikes to booze to penicillin. They also spied on their wartime allies the British, French, and Soviets, who were, of course, doing the same thing in return.

Waller gives excellent examples of the fabulous Soviet talent for advancing Russian interests at the expense of allies, while creating as many obstacles as possible. In Soviet operations in the American-occupied section of Berlin, this included infiltrating civilian organizations with loyal middle managers and planting agitators dressed in American uniforms to turn popular perception against the United States.

*Disciples* has many charms: memorable characters, excellent research, technical insight into the mechanics and logistics of the hidden war, and lucid accounts of OSS battles with and within the Third Reich. These all come together for a thoroughly enjoyable read.

THOMAS MULLEN  
Flemington, New Jersey

### **The West Point History of World War II, Vol. 1**

*edited by Clifford J. Rogers,  
Ty Seidule, and Steve R. Waddell,  
Simon and Schuster, 352 pages, \$55*

THE WEST POINT *History of World War II* provides the reading public with a version of a textbook on military history designed for cadets at the US Military Academy. But don't let the term "textbook" put you off. This book chronicling the involvement of the United States in World War II is deftly written, lavishly illustrated, and accessible. While its primary purpose is to educate cadets, it has been tested and fine-tuned by those students, their professors, and outside experts for accuracy and readability.

This take on a textbook is part of the military academy's West Point History of Warfare series, yet it also works as a standalone examination of the Second World War. The book is broken into seven chapters

that begin with the interwar period and continue to the midpoint of World War II. The authors of those chapters will be familiar to readers well versed in military history: Steve Waddell, Robert Citino, Geoffrey Megargee, Edward Drea, Richard Overy, and Clifford Rogers. Their vast knowledge and experience writing about the war is readily apparent covering topics ranging from the rise of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany to weapons, tactics, and France's Maginot Line. Waddell, a professor of history at West Point and one of the book's editors, writes about the road to war, covering the end of the First World War through the start of the Second. Citino, an expert on the German way of war and a professor of history at the University of North Texas, chronicles the Nazis' early victories. He examines the Wehrmacht's astounding success while dispelling a few myths about the German war machine. Megargee, a senior applied research scholar at the US Holocaust Museum, covers the enormous undertaking of Operation Barbarossa, the June 1941 Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. He also writes about the initial efforts to implement the Final Solution—the effort to exterminate the Jews. Drea, a military historian with extensive government experience and an expert on the Pacific War, details Imperial Japan and its expansion in Asia. He covers the December 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor through the Allied victory in the June 1942 Battle of Midway. Overy, professor of history at Exeter University, discusses the social and logistical aspects of WWII combatants. The final chapter is a brief assessment of the war at midpoint by West Point historian and co-editor of the book Clifford J. Rogers.

Any book on military history needs well-researched and clearly rendered maps, and *The West Point History of World War II, Vol. 1* meets this requirement quite successfully. Readers can trace military operations through the detailed maps that augment the text. Additionally, there are charts comparing military forces for many of the war's campaigns and operations. They provide a welcome visual aid. Illustrations depict the uniforms and equipment of each nation. Fold-out inserts highlight various topics such as blitzkrieg tactics, mass production at Ford Motor

Company's Willow Run bomber plant in Michigan, and naval warfare in the Pacific. The last of those inserts gives an overview of American and Japanese naval tactics with illustrations and descriptions of each nation's major warships. Sidebars are informative and feature details on military operations, sketching the actions of campaigns and delving into aircraft, armored vehicles, warships, and other topics.

Throughout the book, brief biographical profiles give readers a glimpse at many of the senior military commanders of various countries. The commander-in-chief of the French army, Maurice Gamelin, is one notable Allied general profiled. Others include the German Gerd von Rundstedt, the British Hugh Dowding, the Soviet Georgy Zhukov, the Japanese Isoroku Yamamoto, and the American Chester Nimitz.

Some famous speeches are included, such as British Prime Minister Winston Churchill's June 4, 1940, "We Shall Never Surrender" address to the House of Commons. And what book examining the Pacific War would be complete without President Franklin Roosevelt's "Day of Infamy" speech, delivered the day after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941?

*The West Point History of World War II, Vol. 1* is at its heart a textbook for US Military Academy cadets, yet it's a valuable read for anyone interested in history. It's hardly a stretch to say this is a necessary book for any student of World War II.

MICHAEL EDWARDS  
New Orleans, Louisiana

**Midnight in Broad Daylight:  
A Japanese American Family  
Caught between Two Worlds**

by Pamela Rotner Sakamoto,  
HarperCollins, 464 pages, \$29.99

**M**IDNIGHT IN *Broad Daylight* is a stirring account of one family's struggle to stay connected through the ravages of World War II. This was a family of first-generation Japanese immigrants, or *issei*, parents with American-born, or

*nisei*, children. One of the sons, Harry Fukuhara, is the story's epicenter.

Born on January 1, 1920, in Seattle, Washington, Harry Fukuhara was the third of five children born to mother Kinu and father Katsuji Fukuhara. When Harry's father died in early 1933, his mother moved the family back to Japan, where her dwindling money reserves would go farther. During the first year Harry was in Japan, thoughts of returning to the United States consumed him. This intensified when his eldest brother, Victor, was drafted into the Japanese army in 1935.

Harry, then 15, immediately wrote a letter to the American consulate in Kobe, who advised him that any American joining the Japanese army would have to swear an oath of allegiance to the emperor and would thus lose US citizenship. Harry decided to strike a bargain with his mother: if he finished high school, he could return to the United States. She went along with it, and in 1938, shortly after graduation, he boarded a steamer for America. His sister Mary had already left for the States months earlier, and Victor would soon sail for China to fight for Japan.

As Kinu watched her three eldest children depart, Germany and Japan grew more belligerent. German Chancellor Adolf Hitler marched into Austria on March 12, 1938, and less than a month later Japan's government enacted the National Mobilization Act and assumed control of Japanese industry, capital, goods, and labor.

Meanwhile, Harry arrived in the United States to find that things had changed. With news of Japan's aggressive military tactics arriving, his reception was chilly. He had difficulty finding work or even a place to sleep, and he steered clear of police and overzealous neighborhood watches that had been warned to look out for possible Japanese insurgents. Nevertheless, he eventually earned an associate of arts degree from a junior college, and he lived with and worked for an American family that took him in as their own son.

Then, on December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. On New Year's Day 1942, Harry tried to enlist in the military, but he failed the physical exam. A little more than a month later, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066,



giving the military the authority to designate areas “from which any or all persons may be excluded.” Not long after that, Harry and Mary were detained and sent to a relocation center in Arizona.

On the other side of the globe, the quality of life in Japan rapidly deteriorated as resources were funneled to the military. American bombers routinely dropped their payloads on Japanese cities, and Harry’s mother and younger siblings decided to move to Hiroshima, which had not been targeted. Frank began military training, and communication between the family members in America and the family members in Japan became sporadic.

By late 1943, the US Army was recruiting linguists from relocation centers to translate Japanese military documents. Harry excelled at the entry test, and despite poor vision, he was inducted into the army as one of the 444 *nisei* recruited for the second class of desperately needed linguists. Harry island-hopped throughout the

Pacific. His contributions and those of other *nisei* proved invaluable, and late in the war he was among those preparing for the invasion of Japan, a prospect he dreaded, fearing for his family.

When, instead of invading, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, on August 6, 1945, Harry was certain his family was dead. They weren’t, but they suffered radiation poisoning, which would bring early death to Victor and Kinu. The parallel experiences of the separated family are noteworthy. Both groups endured prejudice (Harry’s siblings for being *nisei* in Japan), both endured wartime military service and depravation, and both pined for and worried about the other.

Author Pamela Rotner Sakamoto interviewed more than 75 people in Japan and in the United States for her book. “If a comment appears in quotation marks, it is verbatim from an interview, oral history, letter or other primary source,” she notes. “I cor-

roborated each vignette with repeat interviews with the source, multiple interviews with others, and historical research.” This is a well-researched human interest story.

Harry went on to a long career in the US Army and eventually retired as a colonel. Immediately after the war and for many years beyond, he used his skills, experience, and knowledge to ease the postwar stresses between America and Japan with compassion and cultural sensitivity to both nations. For his efforts, in 1990 he was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, signed by Japan’s prime minister. The next day, he received the President’s Award for Distinguished Federal Civilian Service, a salute from the American government. “Through decades of service,” Sakamoto writes, “he had become a bridge between the United States and Japan.” His story was “remarkable, rare, and unknown.” This book is his legacy.

ALLYSON PATTON

Books and Media reviews editor

## ★ 78 RPM

### The Polka Sisters

**T**HE ANDREWS SISTERS wanted nothing to do with oompah music, so they were less than enthused when Decca Records suggested they cover an old polka. “See,” said Maxene Andrews, “we grew up in the Midwest, so when we heard ‘Beer Barrel Polka,’ we said, ‘My God, we’re not going to sing a polka.’ ...That’s all we heard when we were kids.”

But Jack Kapp, Decca’s founder, kept up the pressure, pushing them toward their inevitable, if undesired, status as the most popular polka singers of World War II. “Finally, one day Jack put it to us...,” Maxene continued. “He called up, and he said, ‘I guess you don’t want to record anymore,’ and I said to him, ‘What gives you that idea?’ He said, ‘Well, you don’t want to do “Beer Barrel Polka.”’ I said, ‘Jack Kapp, we’re going to do “Beer Barrel Polka” immediately,’ which we did.”

The sisters kept that promise and cut the tune in 1939—though with suspect musical treatment. Orchestra leader Vic Schoen admitted, “I hated ‘Beer Barrel Polka’ and arranged it as bad as I could, but it turned out to be their biggest hit.” Indeed, the song so thoroughly hated by the artists jumped onto the charts for a seven-week stay in the top 10. Eventually the record began disappearing from jukeboxes as listeners tired of the insistent two-beat rhythm. Some even believed it originated in



Germany, which was now trying to take over Europe (it actually was written by a Czech).

The sisters suffered their success and, in 1942, hit the charts with two more polka releases: “Pennsylvania Polka” and “Strip Polka.” The first won modest approval initially but went on to become a classic. The second charted for nine weeks on the strength, perhaps, of its controversial subject matter and of Patty’s comic burlesque routine when performing it live.

The Andrews Sisters’ last wartime polka brought fellow Decca golden goose Bing Crosby into the studio for a joint celebration of victory yet to come. “Vict’ry Polka” was on the charts for 13 weeks in early 1944. The jazz magazine *Downbeat* predicted that popularity, while panning the song’s treatment “at the hands of Vic Schoen and throats of the Groaner and the terrifying trio!”

By the time the Andrews Sisters traveled to Italy to entertain GIs who remained there after the war’s end, “Beer Barrel Polka” had made a comeback with altered wartime lyrics. They sang to crowds sometimes five times a day, with fans yelling for “Beer Barrel Polka” more often than they might have preferred. Then, one morning they woke up to a warm sound of appreciation: outside their window stood 50 locals singing the tune in Italian. There were worse things than being polka stars.

CARL ZEBROWSKI  
editor of *America in WWII*

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EVENTS

**CALIFORNIA • Feb. 12–14, Garden Grove: World War Brick Anaheim 2016.**

Gathering of hobbyists and fans dedicated to modeling historical and military-related scenes, including World War II, using Lego bricks. Displays, workshops, collaborative builds, games, networking, and more. Registration required. Embassy Suites Anaheim South. [www.worldwarbrick.com](http://www.worldwarbrick.com)

**Feb. 20, San Pedro: Great Los Angeles Air Raid of 1942.** Historic re-creation of the 1942 Battle of Los Angeles, when military personnel, civil defense, and civilians believed the city was under attack. Living history, food, music, dancing, military simulations. Tickets required. 3–8 P.M. Fort MacArthur Museum. 310-548-2631. [www.ftmac.org](http://www.ftmac.org)

**LOUISIANA • Jan. 6, New Orleans: Echoes and Reflections Holocaust Teacher Workshop.** Free multimedia curriculum workshop. 3:30–6:30 P.M. Reservations required. Education Classroom and Special Exhibition Gallery, National WWII Museum. 504-528-1944, ext. 229. [www.nationalww2museum.org](http://www.nationalww2museum.org)

**Jan. 14, New Orleans: Special exhibit open house.** “Fighting for the Right to Fight: African American Experiences in WWII.” Light reception, musical performance by the Victory Belles, remarks from museum staff and community leaders. The special exhibit (open through May 30) will be open for viewing throughout. 6–8 P.M. Reservations required. Louisiana Memorial Pavilion and Special Exhibit Gallery, National WWII Museum. 504-528-1944. [www.nationalww2museum.org](http://www.nationalww2museum.org)

**MISSOURI • Jan. 23, St. Louis: “What We Are Fighting For”: Eleanor Roosevelt during World War II.** Living history presentation. A series of vignettes with alternating glimpses into Eleanor Roosevelt’s public and private personae. Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site. 314-842-1867. [www.storystsmith.org/eleanor/el-pastperf.html](http://www.storystsmith.org/eleanor/el-pastperf.html)

**NEW JERSEY • Dec. 31–Jan. 1, Camden: New Year’s Eve overnight on the Battleship *New Jersey*.** Dinner, battleship tour, sleep in ship’s bunks, breakfast, and shipboard view of midnight fireworks. Reservations required. Battleship *New Jersey* Museum and Memorial. 866-877-6262, ext. 203. [www.battleshipnewjersey.org](http://www.battleshipnewjersey.org)

**OKLAHOMA • Jan. 15–25, Frederick: WWII Airborne Demonstration Team Winter Jump School.** Intensive training to qualify for participation in living history parachute jump team based on WWII demonstration teams that performed at war bond drives. Visitors welcome with prior arrangement. Frederick Municipal Airport. 918-424-4673. [www.wwiadt.org](http://www.wwiadt.org)

**PENNSYLVANIA • Jan. 30, Annville: Battle of the Bulge Living History Week Commemoration.** Reenactments, living history presentations, period vehicles, vendors of period merchandise. Fort Indiantown Gap. WWII Historical Association. [www.wwiia.org](http://www.wwiia.org)

**VIRGINIA • Feb. 13, Forest: GI Jive Dance.** Dinner, 1940s dance contest, music by the Swing Beans, silent auction. Period dress or black tie. Tickets required. Proceeds benefit National D-Day Memorial. 6–10:30 P.M. Trivium Estate, 7821 Bellevue Road. 540-586-3329. [www.dday.org](http://www.dday.org)

**Feb. 13, Virginia Beach: 1940s Valentine’s Hangar Dance 2016.** Dinner, dance, music by the Terry Chesson Band. Silent auction, prizes. Tickets required. 6–10 P.M. Military Aviation Museum. 757-721-7767. [www.militaryaviationmuseum.org](http://www.militaryaviationmuseum.org)

**WASHINGTON • Feb. 11, Everett: Inside the B-25.** Curator-led program on the B-25 Mitchell medium bomber and its service in the Pacific theater from the Doolittle Raid to bombing the Japanese home islands. Includes examination of the museum’s own B-25J. 7–8:30 P.M. The Flying Heritage Collection. Paine Field. 206-342-4242. [www.flyingheritage.com](http://www.flyingheritage.com)

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# PT Boat Hero, Fallen Friend



NATIONAL ARCHIVES



COURTESY OF LIZA SCHWARTZ LEVINE

Frank Freeland was a “90-day wonder,” an enlistee who completed a crash course to become an officer. The navy then made him a lieutenant in command of an Elco PT boat like this one.

**F**RANK FREELAND GRADUATED FROM Brooklyn’s Erasmus Hall High School in 1933 and headed to the University of Arizona. Then he decided he wanted to be a pilot. World war was starting to brew, and he thought he might fly planes for his country.

Freeland entered army pilot training at Randolph Field in Texas but washed out at the last stage. So he applied to the US Navy and became a “90-day wonder,” graduating as an ensign, an officer, in just three months. When war broke out Freeland was assigned to Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron 2 (Ron 2) for duty in the Pacific aboard a patrol torpedo (PT) boat. He went to say goodbye to his best friend, Jerry Hoenig, but wasn’t allowed to tell him where he was going.

On the night of December 11, 1942, *PT-44* and another Ron 2 boat were hunting Japanese submarines off Guadalcanal. When the other boat got stuck on a reef, *PT-44*, commanded by now-Lieutenant Freeland, went to help. On the way, a shell from a Japanese destroyer hit *PT-44*’s engine room. Freeland knew it was

only a matter of minutes before the boat would blow up, but he tried to reach the engine room. He couldn’t make it through the flames, but he called out orders, remembered crewman Charlie Melhorn, and “the men rallied to the sound of his voice.” Moments later the boat exploded. Melhorn was one of only two survivors.

Not long afterward, a high school friend told Hoenig he had seen Freeland listed as missing in action. “I always checked the MIA list,” Hoenig remembered, but he hadn’t had the chance that week.

There was no memorial service or funeral. “No one thought of anything like that,” Hoenig says. Freeland’s parents mourned privately. Freeland was posthumously awarded the Silver Star, and after the war a PT boat was named in his memory. ☆

*Submitted by LIZA SCHWARTZ LEVINE of Brooklyn, New York. JERRY HOENIG, who now lives on Long Island, says Frank Freeland’s parents died years ago, and few people are left who could tell his story.*

Send your GIs photo and story to [editor@americainwwii.com](mailto:editor@americainwwii.com) or to GIs, America in WWII, 4711 Queen Ave., Ste. 202, Harrisburg, PA 17109



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